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CHEAP EDITION

The Reformation

of the

Sixteenth Century

in its relation to

Modern Thought and Knowledge

Lectures by
CHARLES BEARD, B.A., LL.D.

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THE REFORMATION

OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

IN ITS RELATION TO

MODERN THOUGHT AND KNOWLEDGE

LECTURES

BY

CHARLES BEARD, B.A., LL.D.

PEOPLE'S ABRIDGED EDITION

EDITED BY

HENRY GOW, B.A.

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PREFACE TO ABRIDGED EDITION

THE HIBBERT LECTURES out of which this volume has been condensed were delivered by Dr. Charles Beard in the spring of 1883. They were the sixth of a yearly series of Lectures arranged by the Hibbert Trustees and delivered by men of European reputation. Dr. Beard had been preceded by such men as Max Müller, Ernest Renan, and Professor Kuenen.

The question may naturally be asked why this particular series of lectures has been chosen for republication in a sixpenny edition. There are three good reasons for so doing.

First, Dr. Beard was by general admission profoundly versed in his subject and united with his great learning a very unusual charm and mastery of style.

Secondly, in his treatment of Luther and the Reformation he is strictly impartial and fair to all parties. There are few periods of history where it is more difficult for a man to avoid allowing his own prepossessions to influence his judg-

ments. Anglican, Roman Catholic, and Non-conformist, each has its own history of the Reformation coloured by its own prejudices.

Dr. Beard was an earnest believer in freedom as the condition and in reason as the method of finding truth. But he never allowed his faith in freedom and in reason to warp his judgments of men who believed in authority. He had a deep insight into character and could sympathize with Churches based on principles with which he himself did not agree.

High Anglicans like Mr. Gladstone wrote to him on the publication of the Lectures expressing sincere appreciation of his work, and the well-known Roman Catholic writer, W. S. Lilly, has said : ' Among English writers on Luther, the first place must be given to Dr. Beard.' At the same time Dr. Beard was a believer in reason and conscience as ultimate authorities; he was minister of a church unfettered by tests and creeds, and in theology, like Dr. Martineau, he was a Unitarian. No one can fail to find not only the impartial scholar but the believer in liberty and the lover of truth in these pages.

Thirdly, as Dr. Beard himself felt, we are on the eve of another Reformation in religion. ' The facts and arguments ' of his lectures, he said, ' establish the necessity of a new Reformation of Religion.'

Since Dr. Beard wrote, two things have happened. The results of scientific Biblical criticism have been more and more widely accepted by serious students not only in the Nonconformist and Anglican but also in the Roman Catholic Church. And at the same time the leaders of philosophy and science have become more religious. The whole tendency of the best men of various schools has been to urge that religion is safe whatever happens to the Bible or the Church. There is a deeper confidence in the capacity of man to know God, united with a stronger dissatisfaction with sectarian narrowness, and a greater readiness to accept without fear the results of Biblical criticism.

This growing disbelief in the old creeds, this dislike of denominationalism, this longing for a larger and more catholic spiritual religion constitute a condition of things in which everything points to the need and the nearness of a new Reformation. Love for the old creeds and the old ways has long led men to strive against the claims of science and criticism, which seemed to them merely negative and destructive.

Now men are, in spite of themselves, being forced to accept the conclusions of science and criticism, and are discovering that these conclusions are not the enemies but the friends of spiritual religion. The old creeds of Roman Catholic and

Anglican are out of harmony with modern thought, nor will men be content much longer to remain in orthodox Churches without some restatement of doctrine. Whether the new Reformation will come from within or without the Churches, and what amount of change and readjustment it may involve, no man can foretell. But there can be no doubt amidst the present unrest that such a book as Dr. Beard's study of the Reformation of the sixteenth century has much to teach, both by way of warning and encouragement.

Several of the Lectures have been omitted, and others have been curtailed, in order to bring the book within the compass of the series to which it belongs, but it is hoped that what is included will be found to possess a certain unity of interest, and that it will send some to the larger and fuller work from which it is extracted.

H. Gow.

Hampstead,
November, 1905.

Note.—The omissions are as follows:—The greater part of Lecture I—'Reform before the Reformation'; the whole of Lectures VI, VII, and VIII—'The Sects of the Reformation,' 'The Reformation in Switzerland,' and 'The Rise of Protestant Scholasticism'; also the larger part of Lecture X—Conclusion. Some passages have been omitted from the Lectures that are included. The Lectures are renumbered in the present edition.

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

The only word of preface which this book needs is a request to the reader that he will look at it in the light of its expressed purpose. I have not tried to write, even within the smallest compass, a history of the Reformation, but only to show the relation in which its results stand to modern knowledge and modern thought. There are many chapters omitted which I would gladly have written; and critics who have read themselves deeply into certain parts of the story, may look for much in these pages which they will not find. Should I have proved to the satisfaction of only a few that if theology in this age is to keep abreast of advancing science, and to continue to answer to the inexhaustible religious wants of men, a new Reformation is needed, it will be enough.

CHARLES BEARD.

June, 1883.

INTRODUCTION

To look upon the Reformation of the sixteenth century as only the substitution of one set of theological doctrines for another, or the cleansing of the Church from notorious abuses and corruptions, or even a return of Christianity to something like primitive purity and simplicity, is to take an inadequate view of its nature and importance. Granting that it was any or all of these things, the further questions arise, What were the forces which produced it, and why did they operate exactly at that time and in that way? From the beginning of the thirteenth century to the end of the fifteenth, a lively sense of the need of reformation was never absent from the Church, and repeated efforts were made to effect it. Why did they all fail? Why was it left for the reaction of schism, and the existence of Protestant communions in face of the old Church, to produce that reform of discipline and morals which the Council of Constanz found impossible? Whence originated the transfer of religion from the objective to the subjective

side of things, which marks the transition from Catholicism to Protestantism? Were the forces which produced these results exhausted in calling the Reformation into being, or are they still active and bearing fruit? In other words, was the Reformation a finished process, or do its principles still ask to be carried to a further logical development?

These questions will receive such complete answer as I am able to give them in the course of lectures to which this is the introduction. At the same time, that the future direction of our inquiry may be indicated, it is necessary to answer them briefly and provisionally now. The Reformation, in the view which I shall take of it, was not, primarily, a theological, a religious, an ecclesiastical movement at all. It was part of a general awakening of the human intellect, which had already begun in the fourteenth century, and which the revival of classical learning and the invention of the art of printing urged on with accelerating rapidity in the fifteenth. It was the life of the Renaissance infused into religion, under the influence of men of the grave and earnest Teutonic race. It was a partial reaction from the ecclesiastical and ascetic mood of the Middle Ages to Hellenic ways of thinking: a return to nature which was not a rebellion against God, an appeal to reason which left

room for loyal allegiance to the Bible and to Christ. But this intellectual movement was wider than the Reformation, and when from various causes the Reformation was arrested in its development, was only just beginning to manifest itself in its full scope and force. From it have proceeded the physical, the historical, the critical researches which during the last three centuries have so immensely widened the area of human knowledge. The forces which, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, first began to operate on a large scale, are the forces that have enabled us to look, not only at the physical universe in itself and in its relations to mankind, but at the whole past history of our race, with new eyes. And the question towards which my inquiries will all converge is this : Inasmuch as our outlook upon the physical world is quite other than that of the Reformers—as our knowledge of antiquity, both sacred and secular, has, since their day, been greatly widened and made more accurate—as these changes directly and largely affect our conceptions of God, of the Divine government, of the nature and authority of Scripture, of the importance to be attached to the opinions of Christian antiquity—what ought to be our intellectual attitude towards the creeds and confessions bequeathed to us by the Reformation ?

Why did Luther and Zwingli do what Wyclif and Huss had not done? Something no doubt is due to the great personal qualities of the men, something more to favouring political circumstance. But the main thing was, that the fulness of time had come, in the intellectual revival which was everywhere breathing life into the dry bones of European thought: in the renewed knowledge, first of classical, next of Christian antiquity, which, kindled at the old lamp of Hellas, had brightly shone in Italy, and from Italy had spread across the Alps: in the invention of the art of printing, and its rapid application to be the handmaid of the new learning. There was fresh oxygen now in the intellectual air, and the fire of reformation, once lighted, no longer burned fitfully and feebly, but with steady and consuming flame. The seed-bed of the human mind had been ploughed and harrowed and nourished, so that whatever living germ was committed to it could not but grow and flourish. The Reformation was part of a mightier movement than itself —the manifestation upon religious ground of the intellectual forces which inspire the speculation and have given us the science of to-day.

I

THE REVIVAL OF LETTERS IN ITALY AND GERMANY

THE history of European thought is continuous: age grows out of age: in each generation lives and moves the quintessence of all that have preceded it. In dealing, therefore, with any great intellectual movement, it is impossible to select a starting-point which shall not be arbitrary: wherever you begin, you can always trace further back the positive process of development, the negative process of reaction. At the same time, there are epochs at which the human mind has more signally broken with the past, has more decisively entered upon a new path of progress, than at others; epochs, the significance of which, only partially apprehended at first, has been fully interpreted by the experience of ages. Such an epoch was that of the Revival of Letters in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. We do not give it too pompous a

name when we call it the Renaissance, the Rebirth of the human intellect. Its characteristic and, to a large extent, its moving force, was a renewed interest in the masterpieces of classical antiquity, and an earnest attempt to imitate them. For many centuries men had suffered an unconscious intellectual imprisonment within limits prescribed by orthodox Christian belief and the scholastic philosophy, and now gradually awoke to the knowledge that there was a freer and a fairer world outside. In philosophy, the first step was to turn from meagre abridgments and jejune comments to the works of Plato and Aristotle themselves; the next, to learn from the Greeks the method of independent observation and reflection upon the universe; with this result, that when the lesson was thoroughly learned, modern science came slowly and hardly to the birth. The naturalness of the old Pagan life—not wholly unaccompanied by its licence—reasserted its charm, and powerfully combated the monastic ideal which medieval Christianity had set up. But while the Renaissance was thus a rebellion, quite careless of results, against scholastic philosophy and ascetic theories of morals, it was, in its second stage, hardly less powerful within the limits of Christian belief and practice than beyond them. The curiosity which explored the records of classical, did not

leave untouched those of Christian antiquity. An appeal was soon made from the canons and traditions of the Church, first to the Fathers and then to the New Testament itself. The Greek Testament, the Septuagint, the Hebrew Bible, took the place of the Vulgate in the hands of the learned. The Scriptures, in the vernacular languages of Europe, brought home to the minds of the people how widely different was the Church of the New Testament from the ecclesiastical system over which presided a Julius II or a Leo X. Now at last the abortive efforts of reformation, which in the thirteenth, the fourteenth, the fifteenth centuries had flickered and died away, rose into a great and consuming flame of revolt, the end of which was the severance from the Papacy of a large part of Northern and Western Europe. But the Reformation itself was only an incomplete movement. The stores of knowledge which alone could make it complete were not accumulated till long after its progress had been arrested. Its rising tide broke itself in vain against the dull and obstinate superstition of the House of Hapsburg and the faithless ambition of the Valois and the Bourbon. Its leaders were unable or afraid to follow its principles to their legitimate issue. A rebellion against Catholic scholasticism, it built up a new scholasticism of its own, upon assumptions hardly

less arbitrary. It was met and checked by a counter-reformation, which not only prevented fresh conquests, but won back part of the ground that the Church had lost. But while the development of religious thought was thus practically stayed, the general movement of the human mind held on its triumphant way: Philosophy fearlessly sought for the word that should solve the enigma of the universe: Science gradually plumed her wings for the magnificent flights of discovery which she now makes with so superb a confidence: History reinterpreted the antiquity of the human race, and in disinterring the secrets of speech penetrated to a period beyond written record. We are in the full tide still of that flood of intellectual life which Petrarch witnessed in its first feeble rise. What wonder that theological landmarks which Luther and Calvin established in the sixteenth century have long been submerged!

It would lead us too far astray to discuss the primary causes of this great reawakening of intellectual activity. Probably the darkness of the Dark Ages has been somewhat exaggerated by theological prejudice: within the limits imposed by the Church there may have been more movement of mind than some Protestant critics have been willing to admit. But whether the revival of classical learning were cause or

effect of the first stirring among the dry bones of European thought, it soon came to be the characteristic feature of the Renaissance. Europe gradually awoke to the knowledge of what men had speculated and discovered and sung, before it had been lulled to sleep in the arms of the Church. It was no longer an offence against ecclesiastical propriety or good morals for a cleric to occupy himself with profane learning. Men went back for examples to a time beyond Jerome, who thought it impossible to be Christian and Ciceronian at once, and Augustine, who bewailed the hours he had lost in the company of Homer and Virgil. Presently teachers were brought from Constantinople, where Greek was still a living language: manuscripts of Greek poets and historians were collected and copied: the convent libraries of East and West were searched for remains of antiquity: the charm of Hellas began to work. Popes vied with merchant princes, and despots with both, in the encouragement of learning.

The Revival of Letters in Italy neither led to any activity of theological thought nor produced any religious reformation. Lorenzo Valla is the only humanist whose name can be mentioned in this connexion. He exposed the fiction of the Donation of Constantine: he criticized the Latin of the Vulgate: he expressed doubts

as to the authenticity of the Apostles' Creed: his Notes on the New Testament are the earliest work of modern Biblical criticism. But, with this single exception, the fashion of classical reaction carried all before it. There was no open rebellion against the Church; that was reserved for the time of Ochino and the Sozzini: the humanists, as a rule, were faithful to the common practice of Italy: they conformed and they disbelieved. The existing organization of Christianity they accepted as a fact, while to its dogmatic system they were profoundly indifferent, and, in common with Popes and Cardinals, laughed at its moral restraints. Those were days of open vice, or brazen-fronted licence, when crime went straight to results of which it was not ashamed, and foul corruption poisoned the life-blood of society. And the humanists were neither better nor worse than their contemporaries. The frank naturalness of classical literature contained little that could brace them against the universal dissolution of morals; nor when Zion ran riot was it to be expected that austere modesty should have taken refuge upon Olympus. The greatest truths, the most awful realities of faith, were made to bend to artificial necessities of style. In a word, the classical revival filled the humanists' whole souls. Christian antiquity they despised, and they did not

see that the morals of the Church needed to be reformed.

Two reasons may be given why the Italian Revival should have blossomed into Reformation only upon soil which was not Italian. The first is the Italian character, coupled with the peculiar relation of the nation to the Papacy. Italian religion has rarely been of the ethical kind. It is capable, perhaps beyond all others, of erotic rapture : it will kindle into the fiercest fanaticism ; but it is very apt to cool into an easy cynicism, smiling at moral distinctions, the obligation of which it does not care to deny. Lorenzo de Medici, who writes with the same pen pious dramas and lascivious songs—who presides over a Platonic academy and intrigues to make his son a Cardinal, and strangles his country's liberties —is not more characteristic of the Italy of the Revival than Savonarola thundering in the Duomo, or kindling on the Piazza della Signora the bonfire of Florentine gauds and vanities. The one represents Italy in her ordinary mood ; the other, Italy in her moments of pious excitement. We may compare her to the acolyte who has been all his life too close to the mysteries of the altar to have any reverence for them left. She knew what Popes and Cardinals and Bishops were. To her the perpetual rush of Christendom to Rome to join in the struggle for power and

pelf was a familiar thing. No one was so well acquainted as she with the dissoluteness, the corruption, the cruelty of the sacred city. The very oppressions which goaded Germany and England to revolt, brought gold into her coffers : rents and tithes, exacted in every corner of Europe, were spent in Italy. Except Adrian VI, in the brevity of whose pontificate Rome openly rejoiced, every Pope of these ages was Italian. Of all nations, the Italian was that least likely to feel the moral reproach of a system which thus redounded to its own advantage. If reform was to come at all, it must spring from the heart of a race endowed with a deeper moral consciousness.

But, again, the humanists of the first century of the Revival were too much occupied in learning the lessons of classical antiquity to think of applying them or to find out that they had any application. In them the mind of Europe was undergoing a training which could not till later develop into creative effort. The classic languages of antiquity were being appropriated as literary instruments : the results of Greek and Roman thought were slowly sinking into men's minds, and so preparing them for fresh and independent activity. In the work of the Italian humanists there was no element of originality ; nothing that they did is valued now for its own sake ;

or, if there be anything, it is the vernacular prose and verse of which they thought little. The century which is peculiarly their own is almost a blank in the history of Italian literature: we pass at a bound from Petrarch, Dante, Boccaccio, to Pulci, Boiardo, Ariosto. It was the second age of the Revival which became creative, and that was German, French, English. Italy handed on the torch of learning to the Transalpine nations: while she herself, always more careful of the form than of the matter of speech, continued the task of polishing her language, the graver Northern nations were shaking the foundations of thought. And to their aid came, at precisely the right moment, the invention of printing. It was about 1455 that Gutenberg sent out from his press at Mainz the first printed book, the Mazarin Bible. In the same year Reuchlin was born, and in 1467, Erasmus.

Germany, as we might naturally expect, was far behind Italy in the race of classical revival. In the latter, Latin, up to at least the fifteenth century, could hardly be said to be a dead language: it had never ceased to be the dialect of literature and the Church, and the Italians, in renewing their acquaintance with Roman orators and poets seem to themselves to be only reclaiming a neglected national inheritance. It was Italy, too,

that had been in direct communication with the East, and by Italian teachers that the knowledge of Greek was communicated to the rest of Europe. Germany, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, had already five Universities, those of Prague, Vienna, Erfurt, Heidelberg, and Cologne, to which in 1409 Leipzig was added, and in 1419, Rostock. But if we may judge from the report which Æneas Sylvius makes of the University of Vienna, the instruction given in these institutions was not worth much. Too much attention, he complains, was bestowed upon dialectics, and too much time spent on matters of little importance. Men who were decorated with the title of Master of Arts, were for the most part examined in dialectics alone. No attention was paid to music, or rhetoric, or arithmetic. Oratory and poetry were almost unknown. The books of Aristotle and other philosophers were rarely to be found: most men were content with commentaries.

It was a little later than this that Rudolf Agricola, who deserves to be called the restorer of Greek learning in Germany, crossed the Alps in search of knowledge which he could find nowhere else. He was a pupil of Thomas à Kempis in one of the schools of the Brethren of the Common Life. So far as was possible with the means at their command, they seem to have applied to

teaching the principles of common sense, and to have directed the attention of their scholars from mere words to thoughts and things. Agricola was a fine example of the grave and religious German humanist: from à Kempis and the Brethren of the Common Life he had imbibed a real interest in theology, and, like Erasmus after him, was ready to dedicate all his erudition to the service of her whom he regarded as the queen of sciences. His death in 1485, at the early age of forty-two, prevented him from playing the important part which he otherwise must have done in the literary and religious revival of Germany. But the movement was already too national in its aims and extent to suffer even a momentary hindrance from the loss of one man.

The years during which Erasmus was laying the foundations of that unrivalled erudition which made him the first scholar of Europe—from 1480 to the end of the century—were years of rapid intellectual progress in Germany. Everywhere, but especially along the course of the Rhine, schools were being founded, libraries collected, classical authors translated and imitated, grammars and other schoolbooks compiled. After an interval of between thirty and forty years, during which no university had been founded, a new group came into existence. The

zeal of a wise burgomaster gave Greifswalde its University in 1456 : a little later, Duke Albrecht of Austria founded Freiburg. Basel followed in 1460, Ingolstadt and Trier in 1472. In 1477, Duke Eberhard with the Beard established Tübingen, and in the same year Archbishop Diether, Mainz. Elector Frederick the Wise called Wittenberg into existence in 1502 ; while Joachim I, Elector of Brandenburg, incited by his minister, Eitelwolf vom Stein, who had been Dringenberg's pupil at Schlettstadt, gave northern Germany a University at Frankfort-on-the-Oder in 1506. At the end of the century, almost every German city of importance possessed some educational institute, or, if not, at least a resident scholar, who kept up a close intercourse with the learned world, and raised the intellectual level of the place.

Nürnberg, where the artists, who, with Albrecht Dürer at their head, made it almost a German Florence, were already at work, was the abode of Willibald Pirkheimer, one of the most characteristic figures of this period ; he was a patrician and servant of his native city, who had lingered long in Italy and brought home many Italian friendships ; a votary as well as a patron of arts and letters, at once a translator of the Fathers and a writer of pasquinades ; a stately burgher, not untouched by the self-

indulgence which belonged to the Italian humanist; who welcomed Luther, yet had two sisters abbesses, and who died at last satisfied with neither the old church nor the new. At Ingolstadt, a few years later, lived and taught Johann Eck, a humanist, who had not yet made the mistake of seeking notoriety in disputation with Luther, and who, though a Professor of Theology, eagerly associated himself with the classical revival. Turning our eyes northwards, we find, in the Saxon towns of Gotha and Erfurt, a company of friends devoted to one another and the new learning, of whom the chief was Mutianus Rufus, a Canon of Gotha, called by his admirers the German Cicero, and Eoban Hess, a Latin poet of great contemporary fame, who might in like fashion claim the name of Ovid or Virgil: the one a grave scholar, who never committed his thoughts to writing, except in familiar letters, and who hid behind a decent conformity opinions with which neither Luther nor Eck would have sympathized; the other, a joyous son of the Muses, who had an ode for every occasion and a feast for every friend. And besides these—to abridge a catalogue already too long—there were the travelling scholars, of whom Conrad Celtes, Hermann von dem Busche, and above all Ulrich von Hutten, may be taken as the type. These were the knights-errant of the Revival,

whom we find teaching in every University in turn, always eager to sow their knowledge broadcast, always ready for hot dispute with monks and schoolmen, and for the most part living a life of frank enjoyment. Germany was all astir with intellectual life: the fabric of old beliefs was tottering to its base: some new thing was coming, though as yet men hardly knew what.

At the same time we must be careful to notice that the new movement is not as yet specifically directed against the Church. It rather produced an atmosphere in which the Church's tapers would not burn, and flickered out of themselves. Every variety of theological opinion obtained among the humanists. Some, as for instance Trithemius and Wimpheling, were always devout Catholics: Eck became the champion of the Church. Others, though not many, imitated the Italian scholars in their secret or open disregard of all religion. Erasmus, who had no sympathy with dogmatic Lutheranism, yet felt profoundly the errors and corruptions of the Church, and would have reformed them in his own way, is the type of another class. Others yet again, like Mutianus Rufus, yielded themselves to the stream of tendency at first, but when they found whither it was hurrying them, drew back into orthodox conformity. But while the new scholars were thus, in part at least, un-

conscious of their goal, the monkish theologians, the disciples of the schoolmen, made no mistake. An unerring instinct told them that they had a mortal battle to fight with this arrogant generation of students, who would have nothing to say to Duns Scotus, and preferred Cicero to Thomas Aquinas. It was a hopeless struggle: not only the conflict of darkness with light, but between combatants on the one side stupidly and ludicrously ignorant, on the other equipped with the best learning of the age. And it marks the essentially literary character of the new movement, that the monks unanimously called their opponents 'the poets,' a word of contempt in clerical circles—'a brand mark,' as Strauss remarks with somewhat rueful humour, 'like Pantheist nowadays.'

The war was waged all over Germany. Argument was hardly possible: the poets despised the verbal subtleties of the scholastic theologians, while, on the other hand, the schoolmen blinked, like owls in sunshine, in the light of the new learning. But it was possible enough to silence intrusive teachers, to call hard names, to affix the stamp of heresy, to condemn, to excommunicate, to burn, if not men, at least books. At last, however, in a way almost without precedent, the two armies joined issue in one decisive battle, that of Reuchlin with the theologians of

Cologne. Johann Reuchlin, born at Pforzheim in 1455, is, with one exception, the greatest figure of the German revival. Men called him and Erasmus 'the two eyes of Germany.' Entering at an early age into the service of the Counts of Würtemberg, his native princes, he had studied letters at Paris, law at Orleans: whatever Italy and the Greek scholars there resident could teach him, he had learned in repeated journeys to Rome and Florence. But he was more of a theologian than a stylist: other men of his day wrote more elegant Latin prose than he, though none had done so much to promote the study of the classical languages by the compilation of dictionaries and grammars. But his especial merit was in connexion with the Hebrew language, which he had taken up in deliberate opposition to the Pagan tendencies of the Italian humanists. Wherever he could find an instructed Hebrew, he took lessons of him, sparing no cost. Mutian heard a story in Bologna that he had given a Jew ten gold pieces for the explanation of a single obscure phrase. His Hebrew Grammar, though not absolutely the earliest to bear that name, is the first that deserves it. Half a century later, Melanchthon speaks of him as indisputably the introducer of Hebrew learning into Germany. But Reuchlin, although he had spent a large part of his life in teaching and other purely literary

occupations, was by profession a lawyer and a statesman, not a man of letters. He was a favourite servant of Eberhard with the Beard, the first Count of Würtemberg who assumed the title of Duke, and was sent by him on many embassies to the Papal and Imperial Courts. The Emperor had ennobled him: he was one of the judges, elected by the Suabian League, to decide international disputes. No man was held in higher honour than he: the great humanists of Italy, as well as all the rising scholars of Germany, were his friends: Universities competed for his services: already on the verge of old age, he had retired into the country, and exchanged diplomacy for study and the breeding of white peacocks, when the great storm of his life burst upon him.

Hebrew was a dangerous thing to touch in those days. When Reuchlin in his earlier life lectured upon it in Heidelberg, he had to do it privately, for fear of the monks. The Jews, evermore an accursed people, had crucified the Lord: what could be plainer than that anyone who tampered with their tongue was a heretic and an outcast? If the plea was urged that the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, the ready answer was, that the Vulgate was the Bible of the Church, and quite good enough for any sound churchman. And Reuchlin had more than a philological interest in his Hebrew studies.

Early in life he had come under the influence of John Wessel, of Gröningen, who exhorted him to study the Bible, and, if Melanchthon is to be believed, taught him the rudiments of Hebrew. Like Erasmus, and unlike the Italian scholars, he applied himself to the ancient languages with a theological purpose. He had not scrupled to point out errors in the Vulgate, appealing from it to the Hebrew original; and when reproved for so doing, had replied in the true spirit of the Christian scholar: 'I revere St. Jerome as an angel; I respect De Lyra as a master; but I adore Truth as a God.' But more than this, he was caught in the fantastic net of the cabbalists, to whom Pico della Mirandola had first introduced him. He believed in mystic meanings of the words and letters of the Hebrew Scriptures. He taught a Canon of Bamberg how to find in one verse of Exodus the seventy-two unspeakable names of God. He was thus a man about whom hung an undefined suspicion of unsoundness: if, as the monkish saying went, every good grammarian was a heretic, how much more a man who dealt in such unlawful learning?

To Reuchlin, then, about the beginning of the year 1510, came a converted Jew, by name Johann Pfefferkorn, on a strange errand. The visitor, who, if accounts may be trusted, was as unwholesome in appearance as in character, brought with

him an order from the Emperor Maximilian, then busy with his campaign against Venice, requiring all Jews within the limits of the empire to bring their books to the town halls of their respective abodes, to be submitted to the inspection of Pfefferkorn and such assistants as he might choose, and if they contained any insults to the Christian religion, to be straightway burned. This, then, was the purpose for the execution of which the aid of the greatest Hebrew scholar of the day was asked. For the time, Reuchlin got rid of his visitor upon allegation of some informality in the mandate, which his legal knowledge enabled him to point out. But Pfefferkorn was persistent, and, besides, had powerful friends behind him. Before long, Reuchlin was required by the Archbishop of Mainz, in pursuance of an imperial order, to give his opinion on the question whether all Hebrew books, except the Old Testament, ought not to be forcibly taken from the Jews and burned. To this the scholar could give only one reply. He prepared a memoir, in which he divided Hebrew literature into seven categories, of which only one, and that doubtfully, was declared worthy of the fire : while the general conclusion was, 'that the Jews' books should not be burned, but that with reasonable debate they should, by God's help, be gently and kindly brought over to our faith'—an attempt which

Reuchlin proposed to further by founding Chairs of Hebrew in the German Universities. This, however, was not what Pfefferkorn wanted; and the first result was a bitter personal controversy between him and Reuchlin, in which—so at least thought the friends of learning—the latter lost dignity, first by engaging such an adversary at all, and next by too much descending to his level. But now, as it was too plain that Pfefferkorn was no match for Reuchlin, who was supported by the whole of learned Germany, new batteries were unmasked. Behind Pfefferkorn were the Dominicans of Cologne; behind the Dominicans, the Inquisition. The Jew retires from the fray, but his place is taken by Jacob Hoogstraten, the chief Inquisitor. It is not a question now of collecting and burning Hebrew books but of compelling Reuchlin to pay the penalties of heresy.

The story of the struggle, which lasted for six years, cannot now be told in detail. An attempt to condemn Reuchlin at a court of the Inquisition held at Mainz, broke down. A second inquiry, held by the Bishop of Speier, resulted in his acquittal, and the condemnation of his opponents in costs. Then the case went by appeal to Rome, where Hoogstraten appeared in person, confident in a full purse and the influence of the mendicant orders. But here, too, after long delays, a theo-

logical commission, over which the Archbishop of Nazareth presided, gave judgment in Reuchlin's favour. It proves, however, how much Leo both feared and hated the Dominicans and Franciscans, that he could not bring himself to strike a decisive blow against them, and that, instead of confirming the judgment of the court, he issued a *mandatum de supersedendo*, imposing silence on both parties. But it is important to notice that it is by no means a struggle between the Church, as such, and the humanists. The Emperor seems soon to have become ashamed of the part which he had been made to play, and actually wrote to the Pope on behalf of Reuchlin. The Chapter of Mainz took the same side. The Pope himself was reported to have said privately that he would see that Reuchlin came to no harm. The persecuted scholar found many friends among the various clerical judges before whom the case was heard. His enemies were the mendicant orders and the Universities over which they had control; Paris, Mainz, Erfurt, Louvain, all pronounced against him, as Cologne had already done. The rage of the Dominicans when Hoogstraten was compelled to leave Rome without obtaining the desired condemnation, knew no bounds: they denounced the Pope; they talked of appealing to a general Council; they even threatened schism. On the other hand, the scholars, the poets, rallied

round Reuchlin, knowing that his cause was their own. All the men whom I have mentioned as the leaders in the literary movement, and many more, were his enthusiastic friends. They called themselves Reuchlinists: *Salve Reuchlinista*, was a common form of address in speech and writing. They defended his cause in prose and verse, serious argument and biting satire: they encouraged him in letters: even Erasmus so far forgot his habitual caution as to write to Pope and Cardinal on his behalf. The printers and booksellers were on the same side: the complaint was made, both then and later, that the conservative party did not receive fair play from the new art of printing. It was a struggle to the death, the young men against the old, the classics against the schoolmen, scholarship against ignorance, light against darkness.

One literary device, adopted by Reuchlin's friends to show the kind and extent of the support which was given him, was the publication in 1514 of a collection of letters addressed to him by the scholars of Germany. *Clarorum virorum Epistolæ ad Johannem Reuchlin*. By this was suggested the idea of perhaps the most celebrated pasquinade recorded in the history of literature. If the illustrious men thus saluted and supported their champion, why should not the obscure men do the same? It was felt, however, that it would

hardly do to select Hoogstraten as the recipient of these letters; inquisitors, however stupid and ignorant, are dangerous men to laugh at; and the figure-head put forward, therefore, was Ortuinus Gratius, Professor of polite literature at Cologne, and a scholar of Alexander Hegius at Deventer. To him then were addressed the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum* which burst upon amused and applauding Germany in the last months of 1515. The book in its original form consisted of forty-one letters, written in the choicest bad Latin—not much worse Latin, it may be inferred, than the monks commonly used—and supposed to be addressed to Ortuinus Gratius by men of the party of reaction. The writers, who bear feigned and absurd names, propose to their leader the most ridiculous questions, complain of the treatment which they receive from the poets, and are made to display as if unconsciously the most astounding ignorance, as well as a revolting coarseness of life and conversation, which has yet its comic side. Unlike other books of the same kind, the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum* has not lost its power of amusement with lapse of time: the vileness of its Latinity is as quaint as ever: and it is a curious evidence—allowing for the caricature—of ways of living and thinking which literature might otherwise have been too dignified to record.

A second part, adding seventy letters conceived in the same spirit to the first collection, followed in 1517. The effect was prodigious. The trial at Rome was in a state of suspended animation: but now *solvuntur risu tabulæ*. There were monks in Brabant, says Erasmus, who took the book seriously, as a genuine tribute of respect to Ortuinus; and Sir Thomas More sent him a similar report of English stupidity. He himself was hugely delighted with the one or two of the letters which were sent him in proof before the publication of the whole: an old tradition affirms that his laughter over them cured him of a quinsy. But when all Germany was ringing with the blow that had been struck, and especially when the second part appeared, in which his own name was freely used, his characteristic timidity drove him to the other side; and in a letter to Cæsarius, which Pfefferkorn and his friends did not fail to publish, he complained that the satire of the epistles was too personal. Luther never cared for them: he is on the point of nailing his Theses on the Indulgences to the church door of Wittenberg, and is in much too serious a mood for such light-hearted trifling. But the humanists, upon whom no shadow of the coming storm rested, were in an ecstasy of delight.

The dates alone are sufficient to show that the 'Letters of the Obscure Men' were no such

powerful factor in the production of the Reformation as has been sometimes alleged. Even if pasquinades played a more important part in popular revolutions than they do, the Reformation in 1516 was already too far prepared for the Letters greatly to help or hinder it. Who was their author? They have been commonly associated with the name of Ulrich von Hutten, a man of noble birth, whom love of literature made into a wandering scholar; through almost the whole of his brief life the sport of poverty and the prey of disease; the Lucian of Germany, whose prose and whose verse were equally pungent; who was the friend of Sickingen and of Luther, and who would have been the friend of Erasmus too if Erasmus would have permitted it; always a stout and not too scrupulous warrior for German freedom, and good letters, and—when it dawned—for new religious light. But we have the letter which Hutten, then at Bologna, wrote on receiving the first part of the book; and, unless it were deliberately intended to mislead, it is impossible to reconcile with it the supposition that he had any share in the authorship. That he made large contributions to the second part is amply attested by internal evidence; among others, a most amusing letter in doggerel verse, describing the adventures of an unhappy monk among the humanists of Germany, is plainly his. The

critics are now settling down to the belief that while more Reuchlinists than one had a hand in the original volume, its conception and execution are chiefly due to Johann Jäger, better known as Crotus Rubianus, a scholar who was Hutten's earliest and closest friend. Its humour answers to what we know of his character. Had it been Hutten's, it would have had a sharper edge, a more definite moral purpose. The creator of the 'obscure men' loves his puppets, while he laughs at their antic ways: no seriousness, as from a dissolving world, broods over him: the struggle between light and darkness is only matter for a capital joke. Hutten died, only thirty-five years old, penniless, friendless, solitary, worn out with conflict; Crotus lived to an obscure old age, returning at last, not without suspicion of sordid inducement, to the fold of Rome.

The one name, however, in which the classical revival of Germany is summed up, is that of Erasmus. He is the typical northern scholar. No contemporary Italian humanist had so great a reputation: he was recognized on both sides of the Alps as the literary chief of Europe. Like Agricola and Reuchlin, he travelled for purposes of study: Paris and Rome, Bologna and Florence, were familiar to him: he corrected the press for Aldus at Venice: he learned Greek at Oxford and taught it at Cambridge: all the rising

scholars of England looked up to him as their head. No one else wrote Latin with such ease and elegance: the letters which he exchanged with Popes, Cardinals, Kings, scholars, were eagerly read: his books had an enormous circulation. The 'Praise of Folly,' in its first imperfect form, went through seven editions in a few months, and, when acknowledged and published by its author, was repeatedly reprinted. The 'Adages,' though a much longer and more learned work, were hardly, if at all, less popular. One bookseller, hearing that the University of Paris was about to condemn the 'Colloquies,' printed, as a measure of precaution, 24,000 copies. What income Erasmus derived from his works it would be difficult to say, but he was pensioned by more than one crowned head, and was in the constant receipt of valuable presents. There has been no such literary reputation since; for with the disuse of Latin as the universal language of educated men, passed away the possibility of a single Republic of Letters. England never acknowledged the supremacy of Voltaire; France never found out the greatness of Goethe. But before the sickly scholar of Basel—throwing on every controversy of the age the light of his genius and his learning, though too cautious to take a decisive part in any, the derider of monks, who yet clave to the Church, the Reformer who shrank

from reform, the humanist who would not desert the Papacy—all Europe bowed.

To over-estimate the worth of what Erasmus did for scientific theology is simply impossible. Like most of the other great German humanists, he was a sincere Christian believer, who desired to apply the new knowledge furnished by the classical revival to the service of religious truth and the Church. As early as 1505 he republished the Notes on the New Testament by Lorenzo Valla, the single theological product of the Italian Revival. This was followed in 1516 by his edition of the New Testament in Greek, with a Latin version and notes, printed by Froben at Basel—an edition which, it should not be forgotten, was the first attempt to form a correct text by collation of manuscripts. Subsequent editions, of which four were printed in the lifetime of Erasmus, were accompanied by paraphrases, which, however wordy and unnecessary they may seem to modern critics, were highly esteemed and of great use in popularizing a knowledge of the New Testament. To us, at least, it is interesting and important to know that the influence of Erasmus' version can be distinctly traced in those labours of Tyndale and Coverdale which lie at the basis of our English Bible, and that in 1547 Edward VI ordered a copy of his Paraphrases of the Gospels, in English, to be set

up in every parish church. But, besides this, the labour which other humanists applied to editing the classics, Erasmus largely reserved for the Fathers. He superintended the publication, with more or less addition of preface and comment, of the works of Cyprian, Jerome, Augustine, Irenæus, Basil, Chrysostom. His was a scholar's conception of reform: he rightly apprehended the necessity of placing before men's eyes, in as unadulterated a form as possible, the records of Christian antiquity. Both his New Testament text and his editions of the Fathers have long been superseded; but it should be recollected that without the first neither Luther nor Tyndale could have made their translations from the Greek original, and that the second were the arsenal from which the Reformers drew all their weapons of Patristic controversy.

Erasmus had a keen eye for ecclesiastical abuses, and especially hated the monastic system. It had fastened the stain of illegitimacy upon his birth; it had robbed him of both his patrimony and his personal liberty. No one knew more than he of the ignorance, the self-indulgence, the bigotry of monks, or satirized them with a sharper pen. That the 'Praise of Folly' and the 'Colloquies' were in the hands of every educated man, meant that all the world was laughing at the follies and superstitions of popular religion. Erasmus

might find fault with the satire of the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum* as having a personal mark; but their humour, if more broadly comic, is certainly not more incisive than his own. On every side of his literary activity, therefore, Erasmus belonged to the religious humanists, who hoped that the revival of good letters might end in the reformation of the Church. And yet he stands apart from all the rest. In the burlesque enumeration of the friends of Reuchlin given by one of the obscure men, he finds only a doubtful place: '*Erasmus est homo pro se.*' He does not march in line with the army of the Reuchlinists. While all the rest of the world is sure that new learning must lead to reformed faith, he professes not to see the connexion. 'What have I to do,' he asks again and again, in various phrase, 'with the cause of Reuchlin and of Luther?' He hardly knows Reuchlin, he says; he has only seen him once or twice: the cabbala and the Talmud are things that he does not care about. So with Luther: in the one letter which he writes to him before the correspondence which preceded the final rupture, he accepts his offer of friendship only coldly, and advises him to moderate his tone. To other correspondents he declares that he has not read the books of which all the world is talking: he even takes credit for an attempt to prevent Froben of Basel from printing Luther's

works. All this is in his letters to such men as Leo X, Cardinal Wolsey, the Elector Archbishop of Mainz: but there were times at which he knew himself and his true allies better. When in 1522 he published the third edition of his 'Colloquies,' it was found to contain a dialogue called the 'Apotheosis of Reuchlin.' The great Hebrew scholar was dead, and this was the eloquent and touching tribute which Erasmus laid upon his grave. Again, in 1520, Elector Frederick the Wise journeyed to Aachen, accompanied by his secretary, George Spalatin, to be present at the coronation of Charles V. 'Thereby at Cologne,' says Spalatin, 'the highly learned man, Erasmus Roterodamus, was with this Elector of Saxony, and talked with him of all manner of things; and was asked whether it was his opinion that Dr. Martin Luther had erred in his writing and preaching. Whereupon he answered, in Latin, "Yea, indeed, in two things: that he has attacked, first, the Pope's crown, and next, the monks' bellies." Thereupon this Elector smiled, and bethought him of this answer, hardly a year before his death.'

At first sight, this looks like mere time-serving; and no doubt there was in Erasmus a distinct element of both personal and intellectual timidity. He wished to stand well with all the world, and especially with his royal and ecclesiastical patrons:

he was reluctant to do anything that might imperil his intellectual supremacy. It was one thing to scatter abroad general sarcasms, and another to face personal opposition : there was a cry for reformation of abuses with which it was easy to mingle his voice, yet at the same time to protest against ill-regulated zeal and ungoverned impetuosity. But to stop here is to take only a superficial view of the character and action of Erasmus. He believed in the dissolvent power upon old abuse of intellectual culture. The reform which he desired, and which he did so much to prepare, would, he thought, come slowly, gradually, surely, as the horizon of human knowledge widened and men laid upon truth a firmer grasp. Such a reformation would involve no violent break with the past : there was no need of a rebellion against the Pope, or of an upturning of Europe, or of the founding of a new church upon the ruins of the old. Luther's masterful ways disturbed this literary dream : his theses against indulgences, his resistance to Papal argument and menace, his abjuration of his monastic vows, his marriage, his communion in both kinds, were so many successive blows against the only theory of reformation which Erasmus could entertain. Nor must it be forgotten that he was absolutely without sympathy for Luther's characteristic theology. Justification by faith was a thing

abhorrent to him. Erasmus thought the progress of Lutheranism an injury to good morals as well as to good letters. His own theology was a strongly ethical faith, out of which the characteristic superstitions of Catholicism had disappeared, but which Luther would certainly have declared to be naught. He is the Jerome of the Reformation, as Luther is its Augustine. But it is not wonderful that as time went on, as Luther's aims became more definite and his success more assured, Erasmus found it evermore difficult to preserve even the appearance of neutrality, and at last was forced by the solicitations and remonstrances of his friends to enter upon a controversy in which neither he nor Luther reaped many laurels. His book, *De Libero Arbitrio*, was published in 1524, and from that time to his death, in 1536, he watched the progress of the Reformation with jealous and jaundiced eyes.

It is easy at this distance of time to see that, without the vigorous personality of Luther, little would have been accomplished for the reformation of the church; and that such a doctrine as that of justification by faith, in virtue of its capacity for popular impression and its innate motive power, was a main element in his success. But nothing can well be more unjust than to find fault with Erasmus for not being Luther, or

even for unwillingness to place himself at Luther's side. Neither his strength nor his weakness was Luther's: he was a scholar, not a religious reformer: a sickly man of letters, not a hero of faith. I should as little think of dwelling upon his timid caution in shifting his sails to suit the wind, as upon Luther's ungoverned violence of speech: like all men who play a great part, each had the defects of his qualities. But events have amply justified both. The Reformation that has been, is Luther's monument: perhaps the Reformation that is to be, will trace itself back to Erasmus. He was mistaken in thinking that the reforming efficacy of culture was of quick operation, or that no more sudden and sharp cautery than his own method supplied was needed to cure the abuses of the time. But he is the father of the theological scholarship of the Reformed Churches. His New Testament lies at the base of all subsequent textual criticism. His editions of the Fathers first made possible the study of Christian antiquity. He compassed what was then almost the whole of human knowledge, and brought it to bear upon religious truth. This is, after all, the scientific method, the only method which produces results safe from ultimate disturbance. Luther's personal inspiration still lives and works among men, who learn from him the secret of faith, who catch from him the

contagion of heroism: but the spirit of Erasmus is the life of scientific criticism, the breath of modern scholarship.

There is a story which, though of respectable antiquity, is perhaps more apt than authentic, that when Charles V was holding the Diet of Augsburg in 1530, a party of actors asked leave to present before him a play in dumb-show. Permission being granted, there entered the hall a masked figure, in a doctor's gown, upon whose back was a label, 'Johann Reuchlin.' He threw down upon the floor a bundle of sticks, some straight, some crooked, and so departed. Next followed another, in like attire, whose name was Erasmus of Rotterdam: for a long time he tried to make the crooked sticks square with the straight ones, and then, finding his labour in vain, retired in manifest disturbance of mind. The third masked figure was that of a monk, labelled Martin Luther, who, bringing in fire and fuel, set a light to the crooked sticks, and when the flame had caught them retired in his turn. Then came in one clad like an Emperor, who with drawn sword tried to keep the fire and the sticks apart, but, when the flame gathered strength all the more, went away in great anger. Last of all a Pope, bearing the name of Leo X, came in, wringing his hands, till, looking about him for help, he saw two jars, one full of oil, the other of water, and,

rushing to them like a madman, seized the oil and poured it upon the fire, which, spreading itself all abroad, compelled him to flee. Who these actors were no one knew; for without waiting for reward they disappeared. But the moral of their play was such as even Charles V might draw.

II

THE REFORMATION IN ITS EXTERNAL ASPECTS

THE specifically religious revolution in Germany which we call the Reformation, was part of a more general movement of thought from which it finally, though only gradually, disengaged itself. Germany, as we have already seen, had caught from Italy that impulse of renewed mental activity which was then diffusing itself over civilized Europe, and which even yet shows no sign of exhaustion. It shared in the universal revolt against ecclesiastical oppression, the long-standing disgust with clerical laxity and vice which at the beginning of the sixteenth century was made more intense by the shameless administration of successive Popes. And in this respect it had special reasons for discontent. It was the milch cow of the Papacy, which at once despised and drained it dry. An examination of the map reveals a state of things to which no other

European country can show anything parallel. At least a fourth of the whole area of Germany was under ecclesiastical rule. And it is not wonderful, therefore, that with other feelings of discontent mingled a desire for national independence of Italy. The cry for reform constantly took the shape of a demand for a *German* Council. The nation would willingly, if it could, settle its own ecclesiastical affairs. The Holy Roman Empire was yet much more than a pale shadow of the past, and if any Emperor had been found willing to put himself at the head of his Estates, in direct opposition to the Pope, he might have had a united people at his back.

It need hardly be said, however, that the chief motive power of the Reformation was distinctively religious, and that it sprang in large part from the intense personal conviction and contagious faith of one man, Martin Luther. The humanism of the time at best provided an air in which the new thoughts could breathe and burn: no Reuchlin, no Erasmus, would have dashed themselves, as did Luther at Worms, upon the serried spears of the Papal army. The condition of Germany, divided among so many princes and princelets, jealous of each other and kept apart by conflicting interests, was unfavourable to political action against Italy: three centuries were to elapse before it could be

made one, and then only by the stern logic of force. The only manifestation of popular political life was in the free cities ; nor, except through its religious consciousness, was there any means of banding the nation together and making it feel its power. But this is precisely what Luther did. Himself, as he gloried in saying, ' a peasant and the son of a peasant,' he never—but for one moment, when the Peasants' War seemed to threaten the work of his life with destruction—lost his deep and vivid sympathy with the people. His doctrine of the natural priesthood of the Christian believer was, within the limits of the Church, profoundly democratic. So, too, was that still more central article of his creed, justification by faith alone ; for it made religion a matter entirely between Christ and the believing soul, needing the intervention of neither priest, nor visible church, nor sacrificial right. Luther's rugged, yet always nervous and moving eloquence —his mastery over the German language, then just beginning to be a literary tongue—his deliberate use of popular phrases and proverbs—his translation of the Scriptures which made the Bible everywhere a household book—the prayers, the catechisms, the hymns, in the composition of which he always had the common people in view—combined to make him a national leader, in a way which would have been impossible

on any other than religious ground. When, all over Germany, from Lübeck and Bremen, where the Reformation triumphed, to Austria and Bavaria, where persecution at last succeeded in effacing it, men repeated Luther's prayers at night and morning, and taught their children the hymns in which he had embodied the essentials of the faith, and saw in the New Testament which he had given them how different was the primitive from the Papal Church, it was no wonder that their hearts went out to Wittenberg and the man who had thus made himself the representative of the best national aspirations. There was a moment at which it seemed possible that the religious enthusiasm which Luther inspired and led might take a political form. Under the influence of Ulrich von Hutten, he was more than half inclined to throw in his lot with the schemes of revolution cherished by Franz von Sickingen. But that movement ended in speedy and ignominious failure, and for the rest of his life Luther confined himself to a purely religious activity. He was a loyal subject of the Electors of Saxony. He never wavered in his allegiance to the Emperor, notwithstanding a thousand proofs that the Imperial and the Papal policies were, so far as he was concerned, substantially the same. He discouraged all leagues and alliances in defence of Protestantism which seemed

to have an outlook towards war. He would have the Gospel triumph only in the strength of truth and patient endurance. This may have been a Utopian view, but it at once concentrated his religious influence and gave it something of a national tone and spirit.

Luther's was a singularly strong and intense nature. Only Catholic libellers have ever affected to doubt his absolute sincerity. One spirit ran through all his days, animating them by the same passionate piety. We do not know what were the inward conflicts which drove him into the Augustinian convent at Erfurt, in defiance of the wishes of a father whom he loved and honoured: the story of the thunder-storm in which a friend perished at his side, if more than a legend, only gives picturesque form to the crisis of a struggle which must have been spiritual, and was probably long and doubtful. But once a monk, he applied himself with eager earnestness to the ascetic life, fasting, praying, reading with unwearied assiduity, shrinking from no labour however painful, from no penance however disgusting. He exhausted the possibilities of this method of perfection before, with equal zeal, he applied himself to another and a better: 'If ever a monk,' he said, 'had got to heaven by monkery, I should have been he.' From the first, men augured great things for him. His father thought that a distinguished worldly

career had been marred by his sudden entrance into the cloister. The Provincial of his Order, Staupitz, made him his special care, watched over him in his spiritual struggles, and designated him for work in the newly-founded University of Wittenberg. There is even a faint halo of prophecy about his head, as of one in whom the long-desired reform of the Church might find consummation. For good or evil, he draws men's eyes to himself: Frederick the Wise protected, though he never saw and only partially sympathized with him: Cardinal Cajetan, after his conference with him at Augsburg in 1518, is reported to have said: 'I will talk no more with this animal; for he has deep eyes, and wonderful speculations in his head.' Luther's personal ascendancy throughout life was immense. He had not to wait for fame; it came to him unasked. Already, in 1519, Froben, the printer of Basel, writes to him, not only that the edition of his works which he had published is exhausted, but that the copies are dispersed through Italy, Spain, England, France, and Brabant. At the Frankfort fair of 1520, one bookseller alone sold 1,400 copies of his books. Within two or three years after the burning of the Pope's bull, he was a power in Europe, already the equal of Erasmus in influence, and soon to surpass him. It is almost a rival Papacy which he sets up in Witten-

berg, though a Papacy the authority of which is based on his own strength of character, his own clearness of intellectual insight: on the one hand, Melanchthon obediently holds the pen which he guides; on the other, Carlstadt pays the penalty of individual thought by exclusion from the charmed circle. When, in 1529, it is plain that union among Protestants is above all things necessary to the safety of the cause, and Philip of Hesse lends all the weight of his rank and character to effect an agreement between the theologians of Wittenberg and of Zürich, it is Luther who breaks up the Conference of Marburg by his determination to yield nothing. As long as he lives, he *is* the Saxon Reformation: one of the strongest, bravest, ruggedest of mortal men, who unhesitatingly identifies truth with his own view of it, and will not yield a hair's-breadth, though Emperor and Pope, devils and men, be arrayed against him.

Naturally, he had the defects of his great qualities. He saw religious truth too clearly, and with outlines too sharp, to be indulgent to what he thought to be errors of conception and inaccuracies of statement: if he refrained from setting up against the religious system of the schoolmen another as elaborate, as detailed, as minute (as indeed his followers did afterwards), it was only that his characteristic doctrine, as

he conceived it, was too spiritual to lend itself readily to that kind of treatment. In his confident moods, no one was ever so confident. He spoke as magisterially as if he sat in the fisherman's chair. He had the rough tongue of the Saxon peasant, made rougher still by many a theological affray, and he called names with a burly vehemence which modern ears find it hard to endure. When he is dealing with Pope or heretic, Clement VII or Münzer, he either forgets all rules of Christian mildness and courtesy, or thinks that in such extreme cases they do not apply. I dare not quote illustrative passages, for then, to mitigate the effect which they would undoubtedly produce, I should have to bring parallels from the works of his opponents, and try to estimate the relation in which he stood to the practice of the times. Certain it is that, if most men scolded, few could scorn with such blusterous bitterness as he. But we must not forget that his friends loved him as affectionately as his foes hated him heartily. He kept open house at Wittenberg, with what hospitality, what generosity, what unrestrained kindness of intercourse, his Table-talk remains to tell. There was a perpetual coming and going of grave theologians, curious students, travellers from every country in Europe, young Protestant Princes anxious to see the great leader, royal and noble ladies seeking consolation and advice :

and all had their tale to tell of his accessibility, his frank and pleasant bearing, his cheerful acceptance of the burdens laid upon him. His letters to his children are among the most charming of their kind; while his half-fond, half-jesting references to the domestic masterfulness of his Käthe, unconsciously reveal the light of love with which his home was flooded. When I think of these things, I am not disposed to lay too much stress on an unrestrained loudness of speech, which in part belongs to the age, in part to the circumstances, and only for the rest to the man; and without which, after all, it might have been hard for him to have done his work. It is on a lower moral level, I know, than the sweet reasonableness which once before conquered the world; but will mankind ever again see that strange commingling of the mildest gentleness with the most resolved strength? Courage was the universal note of the Reformers' character: when the Regent Morton said at John Knox's grave, 'There lies one who never feared the face of man!' he was uttering Luther's epitaph too.

Luther had that directness and clearness of insight which come of assured religious conviction, and make every great religious teacher what he is. God and Christ, heaven and hell, were very near and real to him. He prayed much, with a profound belief in the answer to prayer; telling

God what he wanted in the simplest, most straightforward way, and not scrupling to press for a favourable reply. A companion writes thus of him to Melanchthon :—

No day passes that he does not give three hours, and those the fittest for study, to prayer. Once it happened to me to hear him praying. Good God! how great a spirit, how great a faith, was in his very words! With such reverence did he ask, as if he felt that he was speaking with God; with such hope and faith, as with a Father and a Friend. 'I know,' he said, 'that thou art our Father and our God. I am certain, therefore, that thou art about to destroy the persecutors of thy children. If thou doest this not, then our danger is thine too. This business is wholly thine—we come to it under compulsion: thou, therefore, defend'—and so forth. In almost these words, I, standing afar off, heard him praying with a clear voice. And my mind burned within me with a singular emotion when he spoke in so friendly a fashion, so weightily, so reverently with God.

At the same time, this was only one side of Luther's religiousness, though the side which his biographers most love to display. It would not have been as deep and as genuine as it was if it had not had another. Whenever this distinctness of religious insight is real, men pay for it by days and hours when a great heaviness settles on the soul, when all that once seemed clear and vivid is shrouded in blinding mist, and faith is exchanged for an unbelief that is itself a hell.

In another connexion I shall have to return to these times of trial, which recur in much the same form throughout Luther's life, and to show what was their intellectual relation to his more abiding moods. A mythology has grown up around them, taking them out of the class of sober psychological fact; and instead of watching the death-struggle of a strong soul with unbelief and distrust, we are invited to see the ink-stain upon the wall of the Wartburg which records the repulse of a visible Satan. But these temptations, too, were in their way a part of his strength. They gave him a knowledge of that valley of the shadow which enters into all Christian experience; and if, when the dark hour was passed, they did not abate the confidence of his dogmatic asseverations, they did something to make him tender as well as strong.

The intellectual centre from which Luther worked was the University of Wittenberg. Founded by Frederick the Wise in 1502, while Luther was still an undergraduate at Erfurt, it had at first no feature which distinguished it from the other High Schools of Germany. Frederick was a prince of renowned piety: at a time when such acts of faith had gone out of fashion, he had made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and it was his pride to enrich with abundant relics of saints the church which he had built at

Wittenberg. But the destiny of the new University was fixed when Luther, at the prompting of Staupitz, went there in 1508. The degrees which he afterwards took of Bachelor and Doctor of Theology were to him no formal academical honours: they bound him, as he thought, to the eager and persistent study of the Bible: for it, he deserted first the schoolmen, then Aristotle. When in 1518 Melanchthon came to Wittenberg to teach Greek, Luther's impetuous zeal bore off the young humanist in the same direction; and though classical and legal studies were still pursued with some success, the bent of the new University was henceforth theological, and indeed chiefly Biblical. The number of students, which in the first year had been 416, gradually sunk to 127; and in 1508, the year of Luther's coming, was still only 179. Under the new influences, however, this state of things soon changed. Young men from every part of central Europe, and of every rank in life, flocked to Wittenberg to sit at Luther's feet as he preached or lectured upon various books of Scripture. The Reformer himself compares the activity of the place to that of an ant-hill. Says Frederic Myconius, a contemporary witness: 'Up to this time Wittenberg was a poor, insignificant town: little, old, ugly, low wooden houses: more like an old village than a town. But now came thither people from the whole

world, desiring to hear, to see, and some to study.' In 1521, a student writes:

> There are more than 1500 students here, nearly all of whom, walking or standing, carry their Bibles about with them. All go unarmed, and complete concord obtains among them, as among brothers who are brought together in Christ. . . . . There are here Saxons, Prussians, Poles, Bohemians, Suabians, Swiss, Franconians, Thuringians, Misnians, and many from other regions; and yet, as I have said, all live in the finest unity. . . . . The whole city is, as it were, taken possession of and held by students.

Over against Luther, as protagonists in this great drama, stand Charles V and the contemporary Popes, Julius II, Leo X, Adrian VI, Clement VII, and Paul III. Of these I must attempt to draw some picture before I proceed to indicate the way in which events worked themselves out.

Charles V was the issue of the two most splendid marriages which the House of Hapsburg, always fortunate in wedlock, ever made. When, in 1519, Charles was elected Emperor, in succession to his grandfather Maximilian, his position and prospects were such as no European prince had ever before or has since inherited. Emperor of the Romans, and as such, not only holding the world's supreme place open to a lay ruler, but wielding the whole force of the German Confederacy, he succeeded to imperial claims upon northern Italy—Italy of which the southern

half was already his own. His hereditary States, Austrian on the south-east, Burgundian on the north-west, embraced Germany, as it were, between them. He had old claims to pursue and old enmities to gratify against France. Spain, which he ruled in the name of his mad mother, gave him the finest troops in the world: American treasure helped to equip them: the fleets of the Netherlands transported them beyond sea. In 1526, Bohemia, in 1527, Hungary, fell to the House of Austria in the person of his brother Ferdinand. The circumstances of his birth so placed him in a position of preponderating influence in France, as to render it almost inevitable that he should try to make that preponderance absolute and complete. Why should not he and the Pope divide the world between them, one wielding the temporal, the other the spiritual sword? Some more or less distinctly conceived scheme of this kind seems to have floated before his eyes all his life, and, had fortune favoured him, might possibly, from the patient astuteness, the unscrupulous persistence, which he brought to bear upon it, have been carried to completion. But the Reformation divided Germany against him: Francis I, as ambitious and unscrupulous as himself, was eager and obstinate in asserting French claims upon Italy: successive Popes had their own purposes to serve, their own

families to endow: all through his reign, the Turks were a standing danger to eastern Germany, and once had to be beaten back from the very gates of Vienna. It is no wonder that a man who was sustained by no higher an ambition than that of the aggrandizement of himself and his house, succumbed at last to such a combination of enemies. Charles V, at Juste, taking refuge in the cloister, yet unable to detach himself from the world—rehearsing his own funeral rites, while eagerly expecting despatches from Vienna and Brussels and Madrid—repenting of the gluttony from which he could not wean himself—complaining of the ingratitude of those to whom he had given everything—furnishes the moralist with a too obvious occasion for reflecting on the vanity of human wishes.

Perhaps Charles V was more of a Fleming than either a German or a Spaniard. He never learned to speak German fluently: what German he had was the 'Platt Deutsch' of the Low Countries: to the last he communicated with his German subjects either in Latin or by the mouth of his brother Ferdinand. All the magic of Titian's pencil could not invest his homely face and figure with an imperial grace: even in the equestrian portrait which represents him triumphing over the Protestants on the battle-field of Mühlberg, he does not sit his horse like an

Emperor. He was slow of speech, meditative, cold; with a German homeliness among Castilians, with a Castilian haughtiness among Germans. He pursued his ends with quiet persistence, could wait long for a favourable opportunity of striking, concealing all the while his intention to strike; was moved by no foolish scruples as to faith and honour, nor was easily accessible to pity. It was not in the nature of things that he should in the least understand the Protestant rebellion. When, at Worms in 1521, he for the first and only time saw Luther, the resolved yet modest bearing of the Reformer made no impression upon him: all he said was, 'This man will never make a heretic of me.' Adrian of Utrecht had carefully brought him up in the Catholic faith, and the rigidity of Castilian doctrine and practice completed the process. Like all Princes of the time, he had his grievances against the Pope: his grandmother's and his own great minister, Cardinal Ximenes, had remonstrated against indulgences as firmly, if not as bitterly, as Luther: he felt the necessity of a disciplinary reform of the Church, and a Council to effect it. But the Council of Trent, when at last it met, fairly satisfied him: nor did he see why the Protestants should not submit themselves to its decisions. With the doctrinal demands of Protestantism—still more with the changes which

it sought to introduce into the practice of the Church, the communion in both kinds, the marriage of the clergy, the curtailment of Papal and Episcopal power—he had no sympathy whatever: they offended at once his autocratic disposition and his conservative habits of mind. It is quite touching to see how, after years of adverse experience, Luther and Melanchthon continue to believe in him: they cannot bring themselves to think that a young German Emperor can be really opposed to the wishes and aspirations of the German people: they are sure that if only they can counteract the influence of bad advisers, and make their appeal to his own native sense of truth and right, he will take their side. Never was there a greater delusion: at first, intent upon what he thought matters of more importance, he despised the whole movement; once aware of what it was, he never wavered in his intention of stamping it out, utterly and remorselessly, as soon as the favourable moment should arrive.

He never had but one opinion of Protestantism; namely, that it was a mischievous revolt against authority, which he intended to put down whenever a favourable opportunity offered. But when the occasion came, he found that it was too late.

The peculiar political constitution of Germany had much to do, if not with the origin, at least with the protection and maintenance, of Pro-

testantism during those early years in which it might not have been difficult to suppress it. It was a loose confederation of States, ecclesiastical and civil, varying in size and importance from the seven great Electorates to the tiny territory of the robber noble, who claimed right of war against his neighbours, and the free city, which was independent so long as its walls were strong enough to withstand assault. These States met in Diet almost every year, under the presidency of the Emperor or his deputy, to declare war and to make peace, to raise money for imperial purposes, to settle disputes among themselves, to take measures for securing general order. But the authority of the Emperor depended largely upon his position as an independent Prince and his personal qualities as a ruler, while the decisions of the Diet were often impossible of enforcement against a recalcitrant minority or even a single stiff-necked member. It might not be impracticable to put even the most powerful Elector, clerical or lay, under the ban of the empire, but who was to execute the decree and reduce the offender to submission? Whatever the rivalries and dissensions which separated the Estates, to protect the independence of each against the central authority was always more or less the interest of all: nor was this motive practically outweighed except in cases where

the execution of an imperial decree coincided with the grasp of personal ambition or the wreaking of private vengeance. When, therefore, Protestantism established itself under the protection of the Ernestine line of Saxon Princes, and from Saxony not only spread into the neighbouring states of Hesse and Lüneburg, but made its way into all the free cities that were not dominated by ecclesiastical influence, what could be done to dislodge it? If Frederick of Saxony would not execute the Edict of Worms in his own dominions, who was to compel him to do so? To march troops to force Nürnberg or Strasburg, Constanz or Ulm, to send away the preachers and to restore the Mass, would be to kindle the flame of civil war in Germany, after a fashion for which only a fanatical Papalist here and there was ready. After events showed that within any single State it was not impossible to put down the Reformation by a steady system of persecution. Austria and Bavaria were once almost as completely penetrated by the new spirit as Hesse and Brandenburg. Alva and the Inquisition won back Flanders to the Church, when it was hardly less lost in heresy than Holland. England under Henry VIII, France under Francis I, show how in a homogeneous State the fate of the Reformation was overpoweringly affected by the character and caprice of a monarch. It was the

fact, that in a divided Germany the new teaching was able to avail itself of the various dispositions of rulers and the democratic independence of the free cities that gave the Reformation the breathing time it needed.

Critics who think that they discern in the first stirrings of reform the promise of a great national movement towards German unity and German liberty, have expressed their deep disappointment that the Reformation afterwards fell so completely into the hands of Princes. Luther and Melanchthon are politically the most devoted subjects of rulers, to whom nevertheless they do not scruple to speak their minds freely: Bucer propounds a theory of civil obedience as servile as that defended by the Church of England in the days of Charles II. But whatever truth there may be in this complaint should not blind us to the fact that some at least of the Reforming Princes were men of singularly pure and noble character, who at certain crises of the story show to advantage by the side of the theologians themselves. What the Reformation would have been without the three Saxon Electors, Frederick the Wise, John the Steadfast, and John Frederick the Magnanimous, it is impossible to say. The first was the most powerful Prince of the empire, though far less from the extent of his territory or the weight of his material resources, than from

the universal respect paid to his character. There was even a moment at which he might have succeeded Maximilian as Emperor, with what effect of change upon the history of modern Europe who shall say? His relation to Luther was singular. He never spoke to him. His communications with him were chiefly carried on through Spalatin, his chaplain and historiographer. Beginning life as a devout Catholic, he never wholly broke with the Church. The most decisively Protestant thing he ever did was to receive the Communion in both kinds on his death-bed. But he felt a sincere admiration for Luther's courageous honesty; and without committing himself to much that the Reformer said and did, was determined that he should have fair play, freedom to speak, room in which to act. His brother John well deserved his name of Steadfast. Of less powerful and individual mind than Frederick, he was a convinced Lutheran, and resolved to stand by his convictions, cost what it might. When at Augsburg, in 1530, his theologians, afraid of the possible political consequences, proposed that they alone should sign the Confession, he simply answered, 'I, too, will confess my Christ with you.' 'Deny God, or the world,' he said; 'who could doubt which were better? God has made me an Elector of the empire, of which I was never worthy: for

the rest, let him make of me what he will.' His son John Frederick was a child of the Reformation, for his devotion to which he paid by the loss of his Electorate and the larger half of his hereditary dominions. He, too, though hardly an able, and certainly not a fortunate Prince, did not fall away from the religious and ethical standard of his predecessors. Misfortune neither deprived him of his cheerful imperturbability nor made him unfaithful to his creed. On the character of Philip of Hesse rests a blot—such as indeed smirches the fair name of almost all Princes—yet which the unscrupulous bitterness of Catholic controversialists has enlarged and blackened to the uttermost, in the hope of involving Luther and Melanchthon in its shame. But apart from this, he is the most attractive of the Princes of the Reform. Young, eager, enthusiastic, struggling between his religious principles and the vices almost incident to his station, capable of swift decision, able to strike a sudden blow, he is far more a hero of romance than Wise Frederick, looking out with sad, dying eyes upon a world that seemed to be going to pieces all around him; or Steadfast John, too fat to mount his horse without the aid of machinery, and going to sleep under Luther's sermons, though all the while standing by his Reformer with unshaken firmness; or Magnani-

mous John Frederick, almost too patient in captivity, too resigned under dethronement. To Philip of Hesse also belongs the credit of discerning, with a liberal statesmanship far in advance of his times, the unimportance of doctrinal differences in comparison with the necessity of union among Protestants: it was he who called the Conference of Marburg, the effect of which, had not the obstinacy of the Wittenberg theologians stood in the way, would have been that Protestant Germany and Protestant Switzerland would have presented to the Emperor at Augsburg a united front. Could Philip have prevailed, the Church would have been built up from the first on a broader foundation; and the long dissensions between German and Swiss, between Lutheran and Reformed, perhaps even those between Lutheran and Lutheran—the bitterest of all—might have been avoided. When in a private audience before the opening of the Diet of Augsburg, Charles V demanded of the Princes that they should silence the Protestant preachers who had taken possession of the churches, they answered that they could not with a good conscience comply with the request of his Majesty. Upon which Ferdinand of Austria, 'That was what Imperial Majesty could not suffer.' Philip of Hesse broke in, 'Imperial Majesty's conscience was no lord and master over their conscience.'

The Margrave George of Brandenburg cried out, 'Before I will suffer the Word of God to be taken from me and deny my God, I will kneel down here and let my head be hewn off my shoulders.' This outbreak seems to have startled even the saturnine Charles out of his coldness, for he raised up the kneeling Prince, saying to him in his Flemish German, 'Nit kopf ab, nit kopf ab, liever Fürst.' 'Not head off, not head off, dear Prince.' But these were brave and true men, worthy to be leaders in a religious revolution.

Many influences combined to give a character of worldliness to the Popes of this period, and to dye that worldliness with a stain of infamy. It was in Italy the age of the despots; a time when all the great republics except Venice had been robbed of their liberties by men who, both in the Greek and in the English sense of the word, were tyrants; that is to say, who had taken the government of the State into their own hands, and who administered it with arbitrary cruelty. The Medici at Florence, the Visconti and the Sforzas at Milan, the Scaligeri at Verona, the Baglioni at Perugia, were all families of this kind, who conspired and intrigued and poisoned and slew with the single object of confirming and increasing their own power at home and abroad. Over most of them the breath of the Renaissance culture passed, bidding them fill

their lives with luxurious splendour: they built castles, palaces, villas, and, in their moments of remorse, churches: they were liberal customers of the painters and the goldsmiths: they pensioned and protected scholars: they collected libraries: some of them really loved literature and fostered art with a discerning taste. But they were unscrupulous, faithless, cruel, lascivious; men who had lost the very conception of virtue, and in its place, as the rule of life, had set up a remorseless selfishness, varnished over with a certain stately courtesy. Out of this class of men came, with this class of men lived, the Popes of the Reformation, not superior in character, using the power of the Church to serve a dynastic ambition, all the more feverish for the brief period during which it could work its will, and displaying an unscrupulous worldliness, which to us shows the more revolting from the contrast, which they never felt, between their office and their ends. The Papacy was to them a mere political engine; the Church a weight which they could throw into this or that scale of political intrigue; the Papal territory, that out of which apanages might be carved for nephews or sons. These Popes began to build St. Peter's; collected the treasures of the Vatican; employed Raffaelle and Michael Angelo, Sebastian del Piombo and Giulio Romano; drew to Rome the great men

whom, of all Italian cities, she was most chary in producing; but all, as worldly potentates might have done, without a touch of religious awe upon their own souls, or even a sense of administrative responsibility as Vicars of Christ. The Pontiff who was reigning when Luther came to Rome in 1510 was Julius II, a terrible old man, of whose nostrils the life-breath was war, and who deluged Italy with blood that he might enlarge and cement the Papal territory into a solid sovereignty. He was followed by Leo X, Giovanni de Medici, son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, a coarse sensualist, whose name has wrongfully become associated with a period of literary and artistic splendour which was already passing away. 'Since God has given us the Papacy, let us enjoy it,' was his remark to a kinsman when he assumed his dignity: and he enjoyed it to the full, if by enjoyment be meant delicate meats, rare wines, splendid pageants, the homage of painters, the flatteries of poets, never embittered by a moment's fear of the storm that was gathering in the North. For Leo was a pagan in grain, almost a pagan in outward contempt of Christianity: his heart was with neither the past glories of the Church nor its present dangers, but with the last discovered fragment of ancient sculpture, the newest offering of classically turned flattery. Then for a little

while came the Cardinal of Tortosa, Adrian VI, the son of a ship-carpenter of Utrecht, once a Professor at Louvain, and the preceptor of Charles V, a simple and austere old man, who had never been in Rome till he entered it as Pope, fully conscious of the sins and miseries of the Church, and dreaming the vain dream that his feeble hand could sweep out this worse than Augean stable of abuse. But he reigned barely a year; and when he died, the people of Rome wrote over his physician's door the words, 'The Roman Senate and People to the Liberator of his country.' Him followed Clement VII, again a Medici, though in defiance of canonical law an illegitimate one; the most unhappy of all Popes, who, himself a prisoner in the Castle of St. Angelo, saw Rome sacked and all but destroyed by the Constable Bourbon and his army of German lanzknechts. He had brought it on himself: he had striven to hold the balance in Italy between Charles V and Francis I; marrying a Medici to the Emperor's natural daughter; binding himself to Francis by the woeful gift of his own niece Catharine; for yet another Medici seizing Urbino. Then, last of all, came Alessandro Farnese, Paul III, he who summoned at Trent the long-promised Council: born before Luther, and therefore an old man when he mounted the fisherman's chair, but intriguing,

marrying, clutching for the Farnesi, just as Leo X and Clement VII had done for the Medici, and with as little care for the cause of religion and the welfare of the Church. The Popes, it is not too much to say, never discerned the danger that lay in Protestantism till it was too late either to combat or to avert it. They had a thousand things in hand which to them were infinitely more important. When at last they were aroused, their only chance was to set Loyola against Luther, and to begin the Counter-Reformation.

All this may help to explain why Protestantism was, in face of such tremendous forces of opposition, suffered to grow and gather strength. Pope and Emperor, Francis I and Henry VIII, the armies of the Turk and the pirates of Algiers, unconsciously fought for it in turns. Charles was never wanting in the will to crush it : it was always an article of his numerous treaties with the Pope and Francis I that their joint arms were to be turned against the heretic and the Turk. But just when the blow was about to descend, some exigency of politics always intervened to prevent or to turn it aside. When in 1521 the Edict of Worms was adopted by the Diet, Charles betook himself to his Italian wars, not to reappear in Germany till in 1530 he came to Augsburg, to find himself confronted, no longer by a solitary

monk, but by Electors and Princes, nobles and free cities, who had already at Speier announced the new and startling doctrine, that in matters of conscience they, the minority, could submit themselves to no majority, but only to the Word of God.

III

THE PRINCIPLES OF THE REFORMATION

It has often been said that Catholicism is an objective, Protestantism a subjective form of religion, and that when the more obvious differences between them are traced to their root, they issue in this fundamental distinction. The statement, if only it be clearly understood and sufficiently guarded, is both true and suggestive. In one sense, indeed, all genuine religion is subjective; it is the meeting of God and man within the soul in awe, aspiration, affection. There is no distinction here between Tauler and Wesley, between Pascal and Channing: in proportion as chosen saints consciously penetrate into the secret of saintliness, they come to think that the things in which they differ are of infinite unimportance, compared with those in which they are at one. But on a lower level of discipleship these diversities become more accentuated, and religious men are seen to belong to either of two

great Churches, one of which interposes a machinery of mediation—sacraments, priesthoods, discipline, ritual—between the soul and its infinite object, while the other, denying the reality or the efficacy of these things, is content to leave the spirit face to face with God. The danger on the one hand is, we are told, that forms should stiffen into fetters, the shell be mistaken for the kernel, the means by which it was intended to lead the worshipper into the presence-chamber converted into a perpetual bar to his entrance; on the other, the ecstatic raptures should take the place of sober affection—fruitless emotion, of solid obedience—a succession of excited moods, of a steady growth in holiness. There is something formal, external, historical, dramatic, in one way of looking at the facts and truths of Christianity, while the other runs the risk of being merely emotional, lawless, individual. One principle preserves the unity of the Catholic Church, the other splits Protestantism into innumerable sects: Authority is the watchword there, and here Liberty. That bids a man keep his face steadfastly turned towards the past; this compels him, often against his will, to take into his account the future too. One is the spirit of rest—the other, of change and progress; this presents religion as one eternal truth, expressed in the same fixed forms—that owns truth one and eternal, but

confesses it only half perceived as yet, and expects it to assume new forms as man grows and knowledge widens.

This statement, with whatever degree of accuracy it may represent the differences between Catholic and Protestant religion as now understood, would, I hardly need say, be far less true to the consciousness of Luther and Melanchthon three centuries and a half ago. They understood neither the system which they attacked nor that which they founded, in its full relation to the long progress of the human mind. They worked in the twilight: only slowly and tentatively did they come to comprehend their own activity: more than once they turned their back on the logical development of their own principles: in many ways their work was greater than they knew. But I think that I can fairly state what was the religious change which the Reformation wrought in them and their contemporaries, and the means by which it was accomplished. It will be at once understood that I approach the subject only from the standpoint of historical criticism, and that I have nothing to do with the abstract truth or error of the beliefs which will come within our view.

The devout Catholic believer before the Reformation found himself in presence of a vast and variously organized Christianity. Wherever he

went, he was confronted with the visible Church. The Greek Church was far away and, moreover, defamed of heresy : beneath the surface of society there were secret religious communities, which to a pious son of the Church were not only disreputable but criminal. But externally there was one hierarchy, one faith, one ritual. Christendom was visibly one in its Papal head : Rome was the capital of a believing world. This actual unity was the result of organic growth. The Church of the fifteenth century was the Church of councils and schoolmen, of fathers and martyrs, of apostles and Christ himself. No voice which Europe had consented to hear had yet brought its historical claims to the test : it presented itself to every succeeding generation with the unbroken weight of the past at its back. But it did much more than thus impose itself upon the believer in the majesty of an unquestioned authority. It demanded his assent to a vast body of theological dogma, carefully reasoned out, with all its parts logically subordinated to one another and the whole, and that under penalties, temporal and eternal, of the most tremendous kind. There were, so to speak, no alternative means of theological knowledge : the Bible had disappeared from the general eye : the schoolmen had reduced Scripture, the Fathers, tradition, to a system upon which the Church had set the seal of its

approval. And among the theological truths which a man was thus compelled to accept upon pain of not being a Christian at all, were, that the religious life could be nourished only by sacraments, and that sacraments could be administered only by a duly ordained body of priests. I will not waste time in trying to give an accurate definition of the word sacrament and the word priest: they stand for co-ordinated ideas: and the outcome of the system which they denote is, that what some would call a way of communication, others a wall of severance, is built between the soul and God. A man can no longer open his heart to the Divine grace, and be refreshed by the dew of benediction which falls upon it: he must be blessed by way of water or of oil, of bread or of wine; and these have no supernatural virtue if the priest's breath have not passed upon them. And it is unhappily a law of human nature that these hindrances between the soul and its Divine Object, once admitted, grow and multiply: the sacraments are accessible only on conditions of which the Church is the sole judge: the intercession of saints becomes desirable, if not necessary, to the weakness of humanity: the benignity of Mary wins all hearts, till at last the Saviour becomes an angry judge, whose avenging arm is averted from his people only by his Mother's gracious pleading. Nor is the power of the Church

confined to this life: she can bind and loose in purgatory as on earth: her favour and displeasure are as the favour and displeasure of God. Add to this the corruptions necessarily engendered in such a system by the ignorance, the coarseness, the love of rule, the moral callousness of those by whom it was often administered, and you will to some extent understand the sins and shortcomings of the Catholic Church before the Reformation. But neither with these, nor with its undoubted strength and merits, have we at this moment anything to do. The one point on which I desire to fix your attention is, that the believer found himself separated from God by a thousand barriers which he could not overleap, and which drew his attention on themselves as the proper objects of religious desire. For all good, he was the suppliant of the Church. She led him, she fed him, she imposed her own laws upon him, she rewarded him upon her own terms. He accepted her word for everything. She was the perpetual, the all-powerful mediator between earth and heaven. Without her there was no access to God, no spiritual life now, no salvation hereafter.

What, more than anything else, characterized Luther's attack upon this system, was his substitution of the authority of the Bible for the authority of the Church. This was not so much

the result of closely-reasoned theological theory in his or any other mind, as the consequence of facts, which could not be debarred from their natural operation. It is a well-known story that the first beginnings of change were produced in Luther himself by his discovery, when a student at Erfurt, that the Latin Bible contained much more than the lessons which he had been wont to hear read in church, and by the eager study which he thenceforth gave to the book. At the moment when the abuses and oppressions of the Papal system weighed most heavily upon Germany, and at the same time the liveliest curiosity as to all the literary monuments of antiquity filled men's minds, the art of printing put the Bible into all hands. At first, of course, it was only the Vulgate, written in the language of Rome, and dating from a time when Roman religion was already being moulded into its characteristic shape. But the reconquest of the human intellect by the Bible took place, so to speak, in two opposite directions at once: scholars penetrated beneath the Latin to the Hebrew and the Greek, while translations into the vernacular tongues restored the book to the people. A vivid illustration of the former process is supplied by the story of Luther's delighted astonishment when he found that the *pœnitentia* of the Latin was the μετάνοια of the Greek; or, in other words, that what had

always presented itself to him as *penance*, an external form, an ecclesiastical penalty, was really an inward and spiritual thing, repentance, change of mind: while, on the other hand, it is impossible to conceive what must have been the effect, especially at a time of freshly-aroused mental activity and deep religious commotion, of disinterring and making widely known the Biblical literature in all its antique vividness, with all its intellectual charm, in the plenitude of its moral persuasiveness, its spiritual force. I will say nothing here of what its power must have been over the individual heart and conscience: that is a fact which belongs to no age of the church in especial. But one thing must have been abundantly clear to the reader of the New Testament in the first years of the sixteenth century: that the Church of Julius II and Leo X was in both form and spirit singularly unlike the Church of Paul and John.

This result was quickened and enhanced by Luther's method of Biblical interpretation. In a very important sense he anticipated a well-known aphorism of our own day, namely, that the Bible is to be interpreted like any other book. It was a medieval maxim, which no one thought of questioning, that the language of the Bible had four senses—the literal, the allegorical, the tropological, and the anagogical, of which the

three last were mystical or spiritual, in contradistinction to the first. The literal sense preserves the record of facts; the allegorical teaches us what we are to believe; the tropological, what we are to do; the anagogical, what we are to hope. If this is so, it is obvious that the meaning which lies on the surface is the least important of the four, and that the true gold of Scripture can be got only by digging—with this added difficulty, that in the absence of an infallible touchstone, each delver in the mine is apt to mistake whatever rubbish he comes across for the precious ore. Against this manifold sense of Scripture, which, it is plain, destroyed all certainty of interpretation and left the field open to the wildest absurdities, Luther set his face stoutly and on the whole consistently. 'The Holy Ghost,' he said, in controversy with Emser, 'is the all simplest writer and speaker that is in heaven or on earth; therefore his words can have no more than one simplest sense, which we call the scriptural or literal meaning.' But no declaration could possibly surpass this, which Luther repeats in a thousand different forms, in power of angering and alarming his opponents. It was the axe at the root of their dogmatic system. Poor Emser exclaimed in his rage, that if this were so, it was better to read a legend of Virgil's than the Bible. But indeed Erasmus, standing with all his learning in

the full dawn of the new day, says much the same thing. The story of Adam is not better worth reading than that of Prometheus, if you take it only in its literal sense. 'What does it matter whether you read the Books of Kings or Judges, or Livy's History, if in neither you look to the allegory?' Of interpreters of Holy Scripture he says in another place: 'Choose those in especial who depart as far as possible from the letter'—and then goes on in scornful disparagement of the innovators who uphold the grammatical sense. But this principle of the Reformation effected a greater change than is implied in the mere simplification of exegesis, by cutting away all that undergrowth of mystical teaching which hid the plain significance of the text. It converted the Scriptures from a dialectic armoury from which weapons of argument could be drawn in favour of any dogmatic subtlety or extravagance, into an historical record of God's dealings with mankind, full of life and inspiration and comfort. The soul had hitherto been nourished on sacraments alone: it was now to hold converse with the spirit in the pages of the Bible. What God had done for faithful men of old, he would still do for the faithful: the words in which he had once spoken had an eternal and ever-present application. The Scriptures were no longer a closed treasury of truth and grace of which

orthodox learning alone held the key, but an open garden, in which any devout soul might wander, plucking flowers and fruit.

There is no kind of hesitation in Luther's assertion of the authority of Scripture. He rises to its full height only by degrees: he makes the Bible the test, first of the scholastic theology, next of the Papacy, and only at last, when brought to bay by Eck at Leipzig, admits that even General Councils, tried by its standard, must be pronounced to have erred. But having once taken up this position, he never abandons it. It is unnecessary to quote illustrative passages from his writings: we might almost say that the authority of Scripture is their animating principle. But looking at the matter with nineteenth-century eyes, it is very curious to remark how absolutely unconscious the Reformers seem to be of the necessity of supporting this affirmation by any kind of proof, or even of defining the exact sense in which they make it. This is, no doubt, in part due to the fact that none of their opponents questioned it: it was a universal postulate of controversy. The debate with the Catholics was not as to whether Scripture was authoritative, but whether tradition and the Church were to be admitted to an equal position of influence: the quarrel with Protestant heretics was, again, one not of authority, but of interpretation. Still it is

singular to find in Melanchthon's *Loci Communes*, the great repertory of Lutheran theology, absolutely no attempt to lay a surer foundation for the edifice of systematic dogma which he builds up than this assumption. It is like the Hindu cosmogony, with its tortoise resting upon nothing. Another curious fact, that the authority of Scripture is not expressly formulated in the Confession of Augsburg, is probably in part due to Melanchthon's unwillingness to cut himself off from the ancient and medieval Church by the implied denial of the authority of General Councils. Calvin, as we might expect, both from the more logical and systematizing quality of his mind and the already changing character of controversy in his day, gives more attention to the subject, devoting to it three sections of the first book of his 'Institution.' But even he treats it with what we should now think a very inadequate apprehension of its importance. All rationalistic cavils he meets with lofty contempt, resting the authority of the Bible on its own inherent force and majesty, and the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the soul.

> Read Demosthenes or Cicero, read Plato, Aristotle, or any other of all that sort: I grant they shall marvellously allure, delight, move, and ravish thee. But if from them thou come to this holy reading of Scriptures, wilt thou or not, it shall so lively move thy affections, it shall so pierce thy heart, it shall

so settle within thy bones, that, in comparison of the efficacy of this feeling, all that force of rhetoricians and philosophers shall in manner vanish away: so that it is easy to perceive that the Scriptures which do far excel all gifts and graces of man's industry, do indeed breathe out a certain divinity.

And again:

Let this therefore stand for a certainly persuaded truth, that they whom the Holy Ghost hath inwardly taught do wholly rest upon the Scripture, and that the same Scripture is to be credited for itself sake, and ought not to be made subject to demonstration and reason: but yet the certainty which it getteth among us, it attaineth by the witness of the Holy Ghost. For though by the only majesty of itself it procureth reverence to be given to it, yet then only it thoroughly pierceth our affections when it is sealed in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. So, being lightened by his virtue, we do then believe, not by our own judgment or other men's, that the Scripture is from God: but above all man's judgment we hold it most certainly determined, even as if we beheld the majesty of God himself there present, that by the ministry of men it came to us from the very mouth of God.

This, then, in the most precise form in which I am able to give it, is the theory of the Reformation as to the authority of Scripture. It is based upon the concurrent witness of the Holy Spirit in the written word and in the believer's soul. And beyond doubt it expresses a spiritual truth, deeper than which no subsequent age has been able to penetrate: the only question is, to what

kind of scriptural statement does this authentication extend, and what is its precise value? Does it cover historical, scientific, philosophical affirmations, or is it confined to the region of the theological and the moral? But the Reformers did not ask themselves these questions, and would have thought it a concession to blasphemy to answer them if asked by others.

It is logically involved in the substitution of the authority of the Bible for the authority of the Church, that every believer has the right of interpreting Scripture for himself. Luther has said some clear and decisive words on this subject. He maintains, in the first place, that Scripture is easy of interpretation. 'The Bible belongs to all, and so far as is necessary for salvation is clear enough, but also dark enough for souls that pry and seek to know more.' And again, in controversy with Erasmus: 'I say that no part of Holy Scripture is dark. . . . Christ hath not so enlightened us that any part of his doctrine and his word which he bids us regard and follow should be left dark.' Once more: 'It belongs to each and every Christian to know and to judge of doctrine, and belongs in such wise that he is *anathema* who shall have diminished this right by a single hair.' I shall have to qualify the full breadth of this statement presently by mentioning certain laws of interpretation which

Luther laid down ; but even then it will be broader than the practice of the Reformers. For they soon felt the difficulty that the authority of the Scriptures could not be used for authoritative purposes in the same way and to produce the same results as the voice of the Church. The Bible once thrown open to private interpretation, it was impossible to provide that everybody should deduce from it the same doctrinal results as those contained in Melanchthon's *Loci Communes*. All the Swiss Reformers held their own theory of the Eucharist, which was not Luther's. The general body of heretics, comprised under one name of infamy as Anabaptists, wandered into innumerable by-ways of belief. Campanus, Denck, Hetzer, early struck the path which Servetus and the Socini followed. What was to be done ? Melanchthon seems to have indulged the dream of a consensus of pious and learned opinion, though how this was to be imposed upon recalcitrant heretics he does not tell us. Calvin went so far as to say that the written oracles of God were not of private interpretation, yet without saying how this statement was consistent with the maintenance of his Protestant position. Luther held on his way stoutly, not obscurely intimating in the general tone of his dogmatic affirmations, that if other people did not see things as he did, it was their own fault. But difference

of opinion seems to have taught no one the lesson of tolerance. The making and branding of heretics went on as actively on one side of the great controversy as on the other.

Luther, and Melanchthon, who may be taken in the general as the systematizer of Luther's thoughts, in part evaded this difficulty by their conception of the Bible as an organic whole, containing in all its several parts, from first to last, the development of a single divine purpose. It was, in Old and New Testament alike, a gospel, a revelation of God's grace to man. But as this idea could hardly be made to cover the Law, the Mosaic legislation was held to have been temporary and local, and even its moral element, as for instance the Decalogue, only binding upon Christians in so far as it agreed with the law of nature. It will at once suggest itself to those whose eyes have been opened by the literary criticism of modern times, that Luther could hardly trace the gospel through the very various regions of Old Testament history, prophecy, philosophy, without a copious use of that figurative method of interpretation which he had theoretically abandoned. But there is no reason to suppose that he was at all conscious of this inconsistency. 'The gospel,' he says, 'according to Paul in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, is a proclamation of the Son of God, who became

man, and, without any desert of our own, is given to us for blessedness and for peace.' This gospel was antecedent to any written promise or record. 'Look at Adam and Eve; they are full of sin and death: yet because they hear the promise of the seed of the woman, who shall bruise the serpent's head, they hope for the same things as we, namely, that death will be done away, and sin wiped off, and righteousness, life, and peace restored.' Noah and Shem were preachers of the promise. Jacob 'lived in faith in Christ,' wherefore his works, however contemptible in themselves, were well-pleasing to God. Abraham and Moses were 'two good Christians,' Abraham especially 'a right, yea a perfect Christian, who lived in the most evangelical fashion possible, in the spirit of God and in faith.' These instances may suffice to prepare us for the abstract rule which Luther lays down, namely, that the Scriptures are to be interpreted by the gospel, not the gospel by the Scriptures. And this rule is not only applicable to the Old Testament, but supplies a test by which the differing values of the New Testament writings may be judged.

Those Apostles, says Luther, who treat oftenest and highest of how faith in Christ alone justifies, are the best Evangelists. Therefore are St. Paul's Epistles more a Gospel than Matthew, Mark, and Luke. For these do not set down much more than the story of the works and miracles of Christ; but the grace

which we receive through Christ, no one so boldly extols as St. Paul, especially in his letter to the Romans.

Again :

John's Gospel, St. Paul's Epistles, especially that to the Romans, and St. Peter's First Epistle, are the right kernel and marrow of all books . . . . for in them thou findest written down not many works and miracles of Christ, but in a quite masterly way expounded how faith in Christ overcomes sin and death and hell, and gives life, righteousness, and peace. Which is, as thou hast heard, the right kind of gospel.

After this it is quite consistent that he should add :

Therefore is St. James's Epistle, in comparison with these, a mere letter of straw, for it has nothing evangelical about it.

How far this theory may contain in it a secret implication of what would now be called rationalism, I must leave to be discussed at another time. At present it serves as a natural transition to the characteristic Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith alone. This doctrine, as Luther found it expounded in St. Paul's Epistles, furnished the standard to which all other scriptural statements of the method of salvation were brought to be judged, and to which they were made to conform. Let us take it in the words of the fourth Article of the Confession of Augsburg :

We teach that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merit, or works, but that they are freely justified, because of Christ, by faith, when they believe that they are received into grace, and that their sins are remitted because of Christ, who by his own death has given satisfaction for our sins. This faith God reckons for righteousness before him.

In order to give this doctrine its true place in a spiritual system of religion, we must not forget the belief, and still more the practice, to which it was opposed. When the greatest value was being set on mere ritual observance—when the inner pains of repentance were being hidden behind the ecclesiastical form of penance which too often took their place—when benefactions to the Church were accepted in atonement for flagrant sin, and escape from purgatory was to be bought of wandering indulgence-mongers in any market-place—it was a great thing to recall men's minds to the fact that religion is an invisible frame of mind, from which alone can spring actions acceptable to God. This was indeed the antithesis of the New Testament over again, in a shape but slightly altered. Once more there was a ceremonial law, a religion of ritual acts, an intolerable burden of formal obedience laid upon the conscience of the believer, in opposing to which a spiritual gospel, a consecration of the affections, a service of the heart, Luther might well think that he was following in the footsteps

of Paul. Nor, so long as the doctrine of justification by faith was preached by Luther himself could there be any pretext for asserting that he was indifferent to the sanctity of moral law, or that the good works on which he poured scorn and contempt were those without which the manly or the Christian character cannot be conceived. Only those critics who have utterly failed to understand both the great Reformer and his characteristic position, can accuse him of a personal tendency to Antinomian heresy. It is true that the heat of controversy, and his own power of paradoxical statement, sometimes led him to make affirmations which will not bear to be taken literally : it is true that after he was gone, men of a harder logic than his, and a less vigorous moral instinct, developed his doctrine into forms which are ethically repulsive. But he delighted in preaching moral sermons. He expounded the Decalogue more than once : he returned again and again for the material of teaching to the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed. He was uneasy lest the constant preaching of justification by faith alone, by men whose enthusiasm for righteousness was cooler than his own, should lead to consequences of which he could not approve. That note of a great religious teacher—a passionate conviction that holiness is the one thing needful—is almost as conspicuous in him as in Paul.

At the same time, he would hear of no modifications of his central doctrine. It was faith alone, not even faith working by love, that justified. He was too jealous of the operative power of his great principle to admit any other to even a subordinate partnership with it. But then with him, at least in his better moments, faith was no mere intellectual acceptance of Christ and his atoning death, even if that acceptance were of a strictly personal kind: it was such a spiritual incorporation of the soul with its Saviour as involved a changed individuality, a renewed and strengthened nature, out of which all the fruits of righteousness naturally grew. For the Christian so transmuted, it was no longer a question of doing good works in obedience to an external law and, so to speak, to order; they were the natural expression of the new man, as inevitable as breathing and speaking. The doctrine so stated has the advantage of being true to two well-known and indisputable facts of human nature: first, that the motive power of character lies in the affections, and that to produce a cleansed, strengthened, renewed man, there is no other way than to inspire into the heart a passionate love and trust of some worthy object: next, that actions do not so much determine character as are determined by it, and that, to go back to the familiar phrase of the New Testa-

ment, if you would have good fruit, you must make the tree good. But the difficulty is, that this doctrine is peculiarly liable both to ambiguous statement and practical abuse. All the words to which 'faith' answers — *πίστις, fides, glaube*— have, in different proportions, an intellectual and a moral side. On one they rise into 'trust,' and imply a personal affection; on the other they sink into 'belief,' and may mean no more than an intellectual assent. But unhappily 'glaube' alone covers the whole ground. It is faith and belief too. There is no other word in common use for either. Of what a shock are we conscious when for 'justification by faith' we substitute 'justification by belief'! yet for Luther the two phrases were and must have been identical. There is a dynamic force in faith, especially if it be conceived of as inseparable from love; but what strength of change and renewal in mere belief? And it cannot be denied that, as Luther grew older, his conception of faith became more and more intellectual, till at last it comprised little beyond the assent of the mind to certain articles of an orthodox creed. But, once more, what is to prevent the practical abuse of this doctrine by men who accept it on authority, without being conscious of its efficacy in their own hearts, or discerning its justification in facts of human nature? It is a doctrine which fires

and fortifies great saints, but is terribly apt to delude common men with a show of religion. What guarantee can there be in any particular case that faith is that transforming passion of the soul which really makes it one with Christ, and not a cool adherence of the intellect, or a passing spasm of excitement, either quite unable to produce such an effect? While if, on the one hand, faith have worked no spiritual change—if, on the other, the moral law have been systematically disparaged—into what hideous mockery of true religion may not men fall who are cherishing all the while the conviction of their most perfect orthodoxy!

But whatever the merits or the dangers of this doctrine, it was admirably adapted to work the great change of which I have spoken. For it led the soul straight to its Divine Object. It made religion a matter only for the believer and Christ. The promise of the gospel was made known everywhere, from the pulpit and in the pages of the Bible: when once it was accepted, what more was necessary? The need of a priesthood, of a visible church, even of sacraments, fell away. The whole fabric of the Catholic Church crumbled to pieces under the operation of this powerful solvent. Christianity was once more a personal thing, a power within the soul, placing it in direct relation to God.

Closely connected with this is the doctrine which Luther held, in common with the Waldenses, with Wyclif, and with Huss, of the priesthood of every Christian believer. He will admit of no distinction between clergy and laity except one of office only.

For all Christians, he says, are truly of the clergy, and there is among them no difference, save of office alone, as Paul says, that we are all one body, yet has each member its own office, that it may serve the others. This is the all-important thing, that we have one baptism, one gospel, one faith, and are all alike Christians. For baptism, gospel, and faith—these alone make men clerical and Christian.

He explicitly denies all efficacy to Papal or Episcopal ordination. Baptism makes a man a priest.

A Bishop's ordination is no more than this, that in place of the entire congregation he takes one out of the whole body of those who possess equal power, and commits to him the exercise of that same power for the rest. . . . . And that I may put it still more clearly, if a little body of pious Christian laymen were taken, and placed in a desert, who had not among them an episcopally ordained priest, and being there agreed, were to choose one among their own number, married or not, and were to commit to him the office of baptizing, saying Mass, absolving, preaching—he would be as truly a priest as if all Bishops and Popes had ordained him.

He thinks that the spiritual dignity conferred

upon the Christian by baptism is so high that nothing can be added to it. Whoever is baptized, needs only to be chosen by his fellows to be fit to fill the highest place.

What is common to all, he says, may no one take to himself without the will and command of the congregation. And whenever it happens that anyone chosen to such an office is deposed for misconduct, then is he straightway what he was before. Therefore the priestly status among Christian people should be only that of a public officer, who, so long as he holds his office, has precedence, but when he is deposed is a peasant or a citizen like another. Thus, truly, is a deposed priest a priest no longer. But now have they invented *characteres indelibiles*, and prate that a deposed priest is nevertheless something other than a bad layman . . . . all of which are laws and talk invented of men.

I have given this trenchant doctrine in Luther's own words, as they are found in one of his most characteristic works, his 'Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation,' published in 1520. For this is the centre point of his opposition to the Catholic system. In regard to every other matter of dispute with the Reformers, it is possible to conceive that a Church sincerely desirous of reform should have met them at least half-way. The abuses of the Roman Curia might have been removed, and the Pope's autocracy modified into a constitutional rule. The history of French Jansenism shows into how close a likeness to

Calvinism Catholic doctrine may develop. Even the tenet of justification by faith has been held within the Church in forms which it needs some ingenuity to distinguish from that of Wittenberg. The present attitude of Catholicism towards the Scriptures is quite different from that against which Luther protested. The Counter-Reformation removed many practical abuses, and might have proceeded to legalize even the marriage of the clergy, without touching the essential principle of Catholic Christianity. That principle is the nourishing of the religious life by sacraments, which can be duly administered only by a sacerdotal order. Whatever church says and means 'priest,' is on the Catholic side of the great controversy of Christianity; whatever church says and means 'minister,' in that act proclaims itself Protestant. The one in effect declares its belief that Divine grace and help can descend upon human nature only by certain fixed channels, of which a supernaturally endowed class of men have the control; the other asserts that the intercourse between the Eternal and the human spirit is absolutely free, and that all its conditions are fulfilled in Infinite Love on the one hand, and on the other in awful aspiration and the passionate desire of holiness. Neither can free itself from the necessity of defining the visible Church; but in one case it is simply the assembly of the faith-

ful, united by common beliefs, hopes, purposes; in the other it is a mystic communion, inheriting authority from the past, wielding supernatural power by organized instruments, and standing permanently between the soul and God. It was from one of these entrenched heights of Christian theory to the other that Luther made the irrevocable transition.

Sacraments and priests commonly stand or fall together; but they are not united by any logical bond that cannot be broken. If a sacrament be a divinely-appointed means by which grace is imparted to the soul, it may as well accord with the purpose of God to entrust its administration to a minister duly elected by a Christian community, as to a priest who claims succession from the Apostles by the channel of episcopal ordination. Luther's theory of the universal priesthood of the believer does not therefore necessarily conflict with the conception of a sacrament even in its severer form. But this is not the case with his general idea of the relation of the faithful disciple to Christ. If all that is necessary to secure salvation, both in its narrow and its spiritual sense, is to have faith, and if faith must be taken to mean that mystic incorporation with Christ in which all strength and holiness and blessing are shut up, what is there left for the sacrament to do? Push the conception of

faith to the uttermost, and it is recognized as all-powerful: without faith, the sacraments are only empty forms; while with it, they are at best occasions of recollection, spurs to effort, opportunities of devotion. This is in fact Zwingli's doctrine of sacraments: deriving the word from *sacramentum*, the military oath of fidelity, he looked upon them as visible marks of allegiance, which the Christian puts on, and which therefore draw their efficacy from the faith of the receiver. And, at first, this was to a large extent Luther's view also. He is so possessed by his central principle of justification by faith alone, as to feel little inclination to spend time and thought upon the modification, in a Protestant sense, of this part of traditional theology. He does not know how many sacraments there are: he is uncertain as to the definition of a sacrament: it is only by degrees that, with Melanchthon, he settles down to the affirmation of two. But as he grows older, and especially as he sees to what excesses, as he thinks, Carlstadt and the radical enthusiasts of the party are dragging him, his conception of a sacrament stiffens and becomes more external. But the two opposing principles always remain in conflict in Luther's mind, and will not be reconciled. Are we to suppose that an ordinance instituted by direct command of God can fail, and must there not be something

given which is independent of the receiver's state of mind? And yet, again, how can spiritual changes be produced by other than spiritual causes, or what effect upon the soul can water or wine have *without* faith? So Luther is very hard put to it to reconcile his subjective principle with any sacramental conception of baptism: he shrinks from acknowledging a purely supernatural effect of the water and the words upon the unconscious child: on the one hand, he declares that the water is not mere water, but water deified by the Word, so as to have become something quite other than its natural self: on the other, he falls back upon a theory which would be ludicrous but for the perplexity of mind which it betrays, that the representative faith of sponsors somehow stands in the place of the genuine spiritual affection in the subject of the sacrament. But the illogical character of Luther's sacramental theory is still more manifest in the case of the Eucharist. He denied its validity as a sacrifice, representative and repetitive of that on Calvary: he would not look upon it as an *opus operatum*, a spiritual benefit conferred irrespective of the frame of mind of celebrant or receiver. But still he could not shake off the influence of that Catholic doctrine of sacraments which I can only call the magical. He insisted on the Real Presence. If he denied Transubstantiation, he substituted

the still more cumbrous and less intelligible doctrine of Consubstantiation for it. He decisively took his stand on the magical rather than the spiritual side of the sacramental controversy, in the declaration that the body and blood of Christ were eaten, not merely by the faithful, but by the ungodly recipient. At the Conference of Marburg, called by Philip of Hesse, in the hope of reconciling the German and the Swiss Reformers upon this vital point, he wrote with a piece of chalk upon the table-cloth before him the words, '*Hoc est corpus meum*,' and pressed their literal interpretation whenever any concession was asked of him. He did not shrink from the most perverse exegesis of other apparently plain passages of Scripture, in order to justify his literal acceptance of this. Something of this stubbornness was perhaps due to Luther's high conception of the authority of Scripture, and his determination to subject to what he considered to be its plain deliverance the hesitations and difficulties of human reason; but something more, too, to his inability or unwillingness to follow out his spiritual conception of Christianity to its just issues, and to break, if necessary, with old forms of worship. But to any critic of the present day who has quite passed beyond the influence of sacramental ideas, it is strange and sad to see how the Reformation was wrecked upon this rock.

It made an irreparable breach between Luther and Zwingli, who agreed upon so much else, and who, in face of a united and an implacable enemy, had so much reason to draw together. It defied the reconciling efforts of Bucer and the attempt of Calvin to find a mediating theory. When Luther was gone, his followers wandered away into deserts of Protestant scholasticism in search of a definition of the essentially undefinable, and spent their strength in sectarian hatreds and internecine wars. On his own theory of Christianity, the Catholic is justified in attaching the utmost importance to what is at once the central act of worship and the fountain from which the spiritual life is fed; but once the doctrine of faith, and with it that of the soul's immediate relation to God, is formulated, the Eucharist sinks, or ought to sink, into a secondary place. But experience shows that, in religion at least, it is always the lesser differences which engender the bitterest animosities.

It must not be forgotten, in the last place, that the movement of human thought of which the Reformation was the first manifestation on the ground of religion, was a reaction against Medievalism, not merely intellectual but ethical. I do not mean by this that we can set the sixteenth century on a moral pedestal as compared with any that has preceded it—every age has its own

strength and weakness—but that it rejected the ethical ideal which it found in vogue, and set up another. That ideal had been ascetic. The monastic was the highest life. Celibacy was better than marriage, virginity than chastity. The way to the perfection of the spirit was through the subjugation of the flesh. Long fasts, daily scourgings, to wear coarse clothing, to sleep on a hard bed, to rise thrice in the night for prayer, were at once things acceptable to God and a discipline that would purge the eyesight of the soul. But unfortunately this method had signally broken down. It had produced many saints after its own fashion of saintliness, some famous, more without a name; but apart from them, a fearful mass of deliberate licentiousness and open-eyed sin. The long struggle of the Popes to enforce the celibacy of the clergy had ended in an external compliance with the rule of the Church; but almost every parish priest had in his house an unacknowledged wife and family, whose position was in some sort assured by a dispensation which any bishop would sell. But this was far from being the worst feature of the case. Without going the full length of Protestant polemics to the assertion that every monastery was a sink of iniquity, we may safely affirm that monastic scandals were frequent and grievous. From the eleventh century downwards

before the Poor Men of Lyons had lifted up their protest, or Wyclif anticipated the doctrine of Luther, one perpetual cry of moral remonstrance, expressed in every variety of tone, grave, satiric, carelessly humorous, is being uttered in all literature. The vices of the clergy are at once the complaint of the theologian and the motive of the novelist. What the Popes of the Renaissance were in this respect we know; few of them but were notoriously foul livers: but as Agamemnon was taller by the head than any of his confederates, so Alexander VI towers over his predecessors and followers in magnificence of infamy. I do not suppose, from anything I know of them, that our good Saxon Reformers, princes or theologians, were men of a fastidious refinement or a singular niceness of moral discernment; but their consciences rose up in hot rebellion against this frightful state of things, and with a reformation in theology they desired a return to decent and natural life.

In the language of our own day, we should call this a reversion to Hellenism. In a sense perhaps this may be so, but yet not consciously. I have already pointed out the fact that the German were animated by a severer ethical spirit than the Italian humanists; and I can imagine that Agricola and Reuchlin, still more Luther and Melanchthon, looked with deep disgust at the

Hellenism of a man like Filelfo, who, great scholar as he was, emulated, as far as his opportunities would allow, the naked vices of his aristocratic patrons. And it is too much forgotten, in speaking of this matter, that the domestic life of Israel, as recorded in the Bible, is on the whole singularly healthy and beautiful; while whatever germs of asceticism there may be in the New Testament, did not develop into baneful growth until Europe was within sight of the ages of darkness. And it was therefore to the same spiritual source from which he drew so much other inspiration, that Luther turned for the justification of the universal instincts of the human heart. Perhaps in this respect he did not so much direct events as was carried away by them. The time was ripe for this revolution. When he appeared before Charles V at Worms in 1521, he still wore a cowl. It was while he was in his Patmos in the Wartburg that the Augustinian monks of his own convent at Wittenberg began to break their bonds and to go out into common life. Nor can I so truly say that the infection spread, as that the disease, if disease it were, manifested itself everywhere: vows were renounced, monasteries dissolved. So in regard to the marriage of the clergy. First one or two obscure men took unto themselves wives, scandals rather than examples: next, in 1522, Carlstadt, Arch-

deacon of the Stiftskirche at Wittenberg, yet already regarded as an adventurous, if not dangerous spirit, married Anna Mochau : at last, in 1525, Martin Luther, the Augustinian monk, espoused Catharine von Bora, the runaway nun of Niemtsch. The outcry was prodigious : that a monk should marry at all was bad enough ; that he should marry a nun, an unutterable portent : Catholic controversialists predicted diabolical offspring from such a union. When, two years afterwards, Œcolampadius also took a wife, Erasmus, with bitter wit, declared that the Lutheran tragedy was nothing better than a comedy, and ended in weddings. But the marriage of Wittenberg was well and wisely as well as boldly done ; and when the pair plighted their troth, in the house in which they were to live, and in the presence of their friends, they secured the purity and the happiness of innumerable homes.

It would be difficult to understand how Luther ' the monk, who, if ever any, would have got to heaven by monkery,' became the loving husband, the tender father, the cheerful friend, who loved music and kindly talk with his fellows, and held out a frank hand to all the lawful enjoyments of life, were it not that we recognize in him one of those strong and many-sided natures who try many extremes before they arrive at an

equilibrium, and throw an equal energy into every experiment of life. He frankly trusted nature, and would hear of no scruples. 'If our Lord God,' he said once, 'may make excellent large pike and good Rhenish wine, I may very well venture to eat and to drink. Thou mayst enjoy every pleasure in the world that is not sinful: that, thy God forbids thee not, but much rather wills it. And it is pleasing to the dear God whenever thou rejoicest or laughest from the bottom of thy heart.' I freely admit that his theory of the relation between the sexes, if pursued into its details, is not untinged with coarseness; but we must recollect that those relations find their guarantee of refinement in unconsciousness; and unconscious in that regard was precisely what Luther and his age could not be. Mr. Galton has lately asked, in his book on 'Hereditary Genius,' what loss has been inflicted on the race by the monastic system, in the extinction without offspring, generation after generation, of the lives best fitted to hand down a refined and strengthened humanity. The merit of Luther in counteracting this evil was recognized more than a century ago. 'Justus Möser,' says Ranke, 'reckoned, in the year 1750, that from ten to fifteen millions of human beings, in all lands, owed their existence to Luther and his example, and declared that a statue ought to be erected to him, as the sustainer

of the human race.' This is, after all, only an arithmetical way of looking at it: some may even say, that as weal and woe are meted out, it is not an unmixed good to be born. But to have lifted the load of sin from many consciences—to have reconciled nature and duty, purity and passion—to have made woman once more the faithful helpmeet of God's servants as of other men—to have been the founder of countless sweet and peaceful homes—is no small part of Luther's true glory. And he has this appropriate reward, that while it is possible to arraign his intellectual methods of inconsistency and incompleteness, to convict him of passionate self-will and unchecked vehemence of controversy, to show that he was sometimes bitter to his enemies and arrogant to his friends, no shadow of criticism can rest upon him in that simple home at Wittenberg, where he was as a little child among his own little children, and bravely bore, with his true yoke-fellow, the daily burden of his life.

IV

THE REFORMATION IN RELATION TO REASON AND LIBERTY

It is now, after the lapse of four centuries, possible to state with something like accuracy the nature of that movement of the human mind which began with the Revival of Letters, and has gone on with accelerating rapidity to the present moment. It has been, in the first place, an effort to bring both traditional and new knowledge to the test of reason, rejecting as untrue whatever will not stand it, and building up all that it approves into a compact system of fact and inference ; in the second, a slow struggle towards a state of society in which every man is permitted to think and speak as he will, without incurring legal penalty or social disability. I use the word reason here, in its largest sense, as denoting the faculties of the human mind in their collective application to all problems of science and of life, and without wishing to imply

that methods of inquiry are absolutely the same in all branches of knowledge. There are degrees of certainty in truth; and the severe procedure of mathematics is not applicable to history, to morals, to religion. But the period of which I have spoken has been marked throughout by the development of the scientific method. Men have learned the folly of making large assumptions, and then trying to force facts into agreement with them: it is an accepted principle that the collection, the comparison, the classification of facts must precede and justify generalization. Every science in turn has abandoned the principle of authority, and now expects belief only for what it can prove. And liberty of thought, speech, and life, is the practical corollary of the scientific method. Nothing can be less logical than to subject everything to inquiry and yet to annex penalty to the result. First, toleration—next, equality before the law—last of all, social equality —are stages of progress in the art of life necessarily involved in the development of the scientific spirit. The final consummation will be reached when all belief rests upon adequate evidence, and none affects a man's relations to his neighbours.

Perhaps it is only of late years that the scientific method has become sufficiently self-conscious to be thus defined. It certainly was very far from being so in the first half of the sixteenth century.

Then, a greater force than they knew was urging men on to issues which they could not foresee. We shall hear presently that Luther speaks of human reason in the most disrespectful terms; and that the sins of the Reformers against religious toleration were only less heinous than those of their Catholic adversaries. Yet the Reformation was, however unconsciously, both the first great triumph of the scientific spirit and a very effectual assertion of human liberty. It was brought about by the application of certain keen and independent minds to the study of theology: the Reformers, at the very moment that they were denouncing reason and proclaiming their unconditional submission to Scripture, were, in a very true sense, rationalists without knowing it. They had broken away from tradition, the schoolmen, the Church, and with an audacity the extent of which we are now hardly able to realize, had taken their religious fate into their own hands. Nor does the fact that in their intellectual career they stopped short at a certain point, that they failed to draw what seem to us plain inferences from plain facts, or to follow out their principles to their legitimate issue, at all militate against this view. How can the substitution of Calvin's *Institution* for Aquinas' *Summa* be otherwise described than as the consequence of a *rational* revolt? So, too, the Reformation undeniably made for liberty. It

broke the overwhelming force of a Church that would allow no difference with itself. Even though the new churches very imperfectly understood the principles and the practice of religious liberty, it was a step in advance to have substituted three intolerant communions for one. In spite of persecutions, exclusions, disabilities, men breathed the intellectual air more freely. The sects which the Reformation could not put down, proved how real had been its liberating power.

The rationalism of the Renaissance on the field of theology cannot be better exhibited than by returning for a moment to Erasmus, its characteristic representative in Germany. Luther and Melanchthon looked upon him as a doubter, a scoffer, an Epicurus, a Lucian. His reputation among devout Catholic theologians was not much better. His fertile pen was constantly employed in defending a position which adversaries on opposite sides agreed in thinking quite untenable. But the editor of so many Fathers, the scholar who made the first attempt to form a critical text of the New Testament, could not possibly accept many of the conclusions to which orthodox Catholics and orthodox Protestants alike bound themselves. His 'Annotations on the New Testament,' and the defences of them which various opponents afterwards drew from him, are

full of sound observations, which often anticipate the results of modern criticism. His omission from the New Testament of 1516 of the verses, 1 John v. 7, known as the Three Heavenly Witnesses, and his subsequent insertion of them in his third edition, when a Greek manuscript containing the words had been brought under his notice, form a well-known episode in the history of the Biblical text. He gives the textual evidence against the story of the woman taken in adultery quite fairly, remarking that it was absent from most Greek manuscripts. At the same time he retains it in the text as found in one, which he had himself seen, and as being universally received. He admits lapses of memory and failures of judgment in the Apostles: Christ alone is called the Truth, and is wholly free from error. He thinks that the Gospel of Mark is an abridgment of that of Matthew, and calls attention to the fact that Luke is not an eyewitness of the things that he relates. He repeats the opinion of Jerome, that Clement of Rome was very likely the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews: in his own cautious way he casts doubt on the Johannine authorship of the Apocalypse, going so far as to say that he could easily believe that the heretic Cerinthus had written the book as a means of spreading his poison through the world. Nor is he less hardy in regard to doctrine. Accused of un-

soundness on the subject of the Trinity, he adduces eighty passages from his writings in which he had expressed himself in the true orthodox way; but not the less he points out how very seldom Christ is called God in the New Testament, and declares that the Holy Ghost is never so denominated. In his dialogue, 'The Shipwreck,' he does not scruple to treat the Virgin as the successor of Venus, once the peculiar goddess of unhappy mariners. He was not too orthodox as to the Sacraments. In regard to Baptism, he made a distinction, which is certainly inconsistent with Catholic doctrine, between those who receive the sacrament without its accompanying grace, and the true Christians who answer to it with newness of life. If it were not for the general opinion of the Church, he says that he should adopt Œcolampadius' opinion as to the Lord's Supper; while Melanchthon boldly declares that the whole Eucharistic strife took its origin from Erasmus. Upon Eternal Punishment he was still more hopelessly rationalistic. 'There is no other flame,' he said, 'in which the sinner is plagued, and no other punishment of hell, than the perpetual anguish of mind which accompanies habitual sin.' These statements, which might be made much more numerous, may suffice to show that the Renaissance, in the hands of serious men, was prepared to bring Scripture

and the Creeds to the test of sound reason, and that, but for the action of other and opposing forces, many of the questions which we are apt to think exclusively characteristic of our own age, might have taken shape and received at least a tentative answer three centuries ago.

At first it seemed as if Luther might be about to apply, with a more fiery earnestness and a deeper dogmatic purpose, the method of Erasmus to theology. His intellectual history, from his first attack upon indulgences to the consummation of his revolt against Rome at the Diet of Worms, is one of gradually rising discord between his own mind and accepted opinions. Had I time, I might enumerate its stages and trace its method, showing how he was forced, as it were against his will, to abandon Popes, schoolmen, tradition, fathers, councils, until at last he entrenched himself behind the inexpugnable authority of Scripture. And he knew both what he was doing and on what principle he did it. When at the supreme moment of his life he was asked, in the presence of the Emperor and the assembled States, whether he would retract what he had written, he replied that he could not do so unless he was refuted by appeal to Scripture or by cogent reasons. A few days later, before a Commission presided over by the Elector Archbishop of Trier, he made the same reply in the same terms to the Margrave

Joachim of Brandenburg. It is impossible to doubt that he here assigns to reason an independent position by the side of Scripture: the words will bear no other interpretation: while the repetition of them, after some days had passed, forbids us to suppose that they had been lightly uttered. But I know of no later word of Luther's that can be fairly quoted in the same sense. From Worms he passed to his Patmos on the Wartburg, whence he emerged only to quell the tumult which the so-called Prophets of Zwickau had raised at Wittenberg. And this was the beginning of reaction. First Carlstadt, who had caught the infection of independent thought from the men of Zwickau, seceded from the main body of the Reformers; next Thomas Münzer fanned that flame of social discontent which kindled the widespread conflagration of the Peasants' War; then the various forms of free-thought and moral revolt which are all comprised in the one word Anabaptism began to perplex and discredit the Reformation. All these things were, in Luther's view, only so many manifestations of presumptuous human reason intruding itself into the region of faith: it was reason that denied the necessity of baptism; it was reason that would not accept, in their plain literal meaning, the words, 'This is my body'; and against reason, therefore, he set himself, with a hardness

and a bitterness which grew harder and more bitter to the day of his death.

It is possible, I know, to quote passages from Luther's works which at first sight do not seem to agree with this account of his position. But on further examination they will all be found so limited by the context as really to fall in with it. For instance, he writes in 1522: 'What then is contrary to reason is certainly much more contrary to God. For how should not that be against divine truth which is against reason and human truth?' But then, only a few lines before, he had said that the monastic vows of which he is speaking were 'contrary to natural reason, that is, to the dark and gross light of nature. For although,' he goes on, 'the same can neither understand nor of itself attain to the light and the works of God, so that *in affirmativis* its judgment is quite gross and uncertain, yet *in negativis*, that is, in what a thing is not, its judgment and understanding are certain. For reason does not comprehend what God is; yet it comprehends in the most certain way what God is not.' So in certain articles of disputation of the date of 1536, he says: 'It is admitted that reason is the chief of all things, and among all that belongs to this life the best, yea, a something divine.' She is the inventress and queen of all arts, of all wisdom, power, virtue, honour, which

men possess in this life: that which distinguishes man from all other creatures: a sun, and as it were a god, which is set for the ruling of these things in this life. But, again, he proceeds to say that reason knows her own majesty and excellence not of herself, but only from Scripture, and that the moment she sets herself against Scripture her ignorance is manifest. In 1544, he calls reason a very great and priceless gift of God, yet goes on to qualify it as a light that is only darkness; while in 1546, the last year of his life, he acknowledges it to be a light, and a beautiful light too, yet which cannot find the way out of sin and death into righteousness and life, but abideth in darkness. So that, even taken alone, the passages in which Luther is supposed to sound the praises of human reason would justify the assertion that he assigned to it only a narrow place and a low function in relation to the highest subjects of thought. He allows it none but a negative efficacy: he strictly limits its actions to the things of this life. But there are other passages again in which, especially when angered by rationalistic objections to the doctrines which were the foundations of his system, he vituperates it with all the energy of which he is capable. 'The more subtle and acute in reason, without knowledge of divine grace,' he says in his Exposition of the Epistle to the Galatians,

'the more poisonous a beast, with many dragons' heads, is it, against God and all his works'; while a few lines further on he calls it 'an ugly Devil's bride' and 'God's bitterest enemy.' 'There is a speculative theology,' he is reported to have said in his Table-talk, 'which men regulate according to reason and their own speculations of things. Such a speculative theology belongs to the Devil in hell.' But it was in a sermon of the date of 1546, the last he ever preached at Wittenberg, that Luther, now upon the verge of the grave, gives full vent, in language that is too gross to be quoted, to his hatred and contempt of reason in the domain of theology. It seems now as if the very utterance of the word were enough to throw wide open the flood-gates of his abuse.

At the same time nothing can well be more marked than the inconsistency between Luther's theory and his practice in this matter, especially in regard to Biblical criticism. It is quite true that he had little or no conception of Biblical criticism as a science, and was very far indeed from working on the lines which Erasmus had begun to lay down. But he formed independent judgments as to both the authorship and the contents of Biblical books which are not easy to reconcile with that unconditional submission to the authority of Scripture which he exacted of others. And these judgments he often expressed

in very trenchant phrase. I have already, in my last Lecture, quoted passages in which he measures the worth of the various books of the New Testament by the prominence which they give to his peculiar conception of the gospel: strongly preferring the Fourth to the Synoptical Gospels: elevating the Epistle to the Romans to the highest, depressing the Epistle of James to the lowest place. For this he might plead the principle of the *analogia fidei*, although it must be confessed that his application of it was not only uncompromising, but rude. But he looked at the Scriptures with an individual eye, and was not restrained by any superstitious reverence from reporting what he thought he saw. He asked, what it mattered even if Moses were not the author of Genesis? He saw the essential superiority of the Books of Kings over those of Chronicles as an historical record, and did not hesitate to pronounce the former the more credible. He discerned the dramatic character of the Book of Job, and compared its structure to that of the Comedies of Terence. The Book of Ecclesiastes, he thought, was not the production of Solomon, but of Sirach, and belonged to the time of the Maccabees. He wished that the Second Book of Maccabees and that of Esther did not exist, partly for their too Jewish tendency, partly because they contain much heathen folly. He points out

that the prophecies of Jeremiah, as we have them, are not in chronological order, and hence infers that they were made into a book, not by the prophet himself, but by a compiler. The story of Jonah he stigmatizes in the strongest terms as absolutely incredible, 'more lying and more absurd than any fable of the poets; and if it did not stand in the Bible, I should laugh at it as a lie.' He declares the Epistle to the Hebrews to be the work neither of Paul nor of any other Apostle, and rightly appeals to chap. ii. 3 to prove that the author must have belonged to another generation than the apostolic. 'Who wrote it,' he says, 'is unknown, but also it does not matter.' He did worse than call the Epistle of James a letter of straw: he did not believe it to be the production of an Apostle at all, and would not admit that it was possible to reconcile its doctrine with that of Paul.

Many have laboured and sweated over the Epistle of St. James to reconcile it with St. Paul. As also Philip Melanchthon has somewhat treated of the matter in his Apologia, but not earnestly: for that faith justifies and faith does not justify are clean contrary the one to the other. Whoso can make them accord, upon his head will I set my doctor's cap, and allow myself to be reproved for a fool.

The Epistle of Jude he clearly saw to be an extract from or a copy of 2 Peter, and to be post-

apostolic. Last of all, the figurative character of the Apocalypse offended him: he found nothing like it in any prophet either in the Old or the New Testament, and in a Preface, which was afterwards suppressed, he declared that he held it as neither prophetic nor apostolic.

Nor did he apply this freedom of treatment only to questions of authenticity or genuineness. He criticized the matter as well as the form of Scripture. He disparaged, for instance, the predictive function of prophecy, appealing for support of his view to the authority of Paul. Such prophecy is in the New Testament unnecessary, 'for it neither teaches nor augments Christian faith. Wherefore it is almost one of the least gifts of God, and sometimes even comes from the Devil.' He had no great opinion of the efficacy of miracles in producing conviction. What, he asked, without faith, is the use of all miracles? What good to the Jews were the miracles of Christ and his Apostles? He did not care to be able to work miracles himself; for signs, he thought, would not move them who did not of themselves turn to that Word against which the whole world can object, nothing. Besides, as he said over and over again, miracles may deceive: the Devil can and does work wonders when he chooses. If a saint, after his death, works miracles at his tomb, who knows that God

is not thereby tempting us? He compares the physical with the moral miracles of Christ, greatly to the disadvantage of the former, which he calls 'trifling and almost foolish wonders in comparison with the right lofty miracles which Christ performs in Christendom, without intermission, by his divine almighty power.' He recognized the existence of discrepancies in Scripture, but thought them of little consequence if the main facts of faith were fully grasped.

There are and remain questions which I will not resolve: nor are they of any great matter, except that there are many people who are so sharp and subtle, and bring up all manner of questions whereof they will have exact speech and answer. . . . . When a contradiction occurs in Holy Scripture, and it cannot be reconciled, so let it go.

He takes a strong view on the contention of Paul with Peter, being very unwilling to let the latter off as easily as Jerome does: on the contrary, he declares the Apostle not only to have made a mistake, but to have sinned grossly and grievously. 'Foolish' is a word which he applies both to James and to Moses: to the former, certainly in sad earnest; to the latter, usually, if not always, with a tacit reference to that 'foolishness of God which is wiser than men,' and in not dishonourable contrast to human reason.

In one sense, the fact that the Bible was a fresh phenomenon in Luther's eyes helped him to see it as it was; nor did his perception of its literary peculiarities at all impair his sense of its wonderful spiritual worth and efficacy. It was an afterthought of less original and courageous minds to make no distinction between different parts of the Bible, to regard it all with the same dull and superstitious reverence, and to force the most reluctant facts into the mould of this belief. But if it was a necessity of Luther's nature and intellectual position thus to look at Scripture with rationalistic eyes, his whole theory of the relation of faith to reason shows that if he were not a rationalist—but indeed the logical opposite of one—it was in virtue of a rigorous process of self-suppression. With him, reason and faith were mortal enemies. He almost seems to glory in the '*credo quia impossibile*.' He does not shrink from stating in the most uncompromising way that what Scripture imposes upon us is precisely what reason would bid us reject.

All the articles of our Christian faith, he says in his Exposition of the Epistle to the Galatians, which God has revealed to us in his Word, are in presence of reason sheerly impossible, absurd, false. What, thinks that cunning little fool, can be more absurd and impossible than that Christ should give us in the Supper his body and his blood to eat and to drink? Item, that Baptism should be a bath of

regeneration and renewal of the Holy Ghost? That the dead should rise again at the last day? That Christ the Son of God should be conceived and borne in the womb of the Virgin Mary, should become man, suffer, die a shameful death upon the cross, sit at the right hand of the Father, and have all power and might in heaven and on earth?

He repeats this thought in a variety of forms. Speaking of the Trinity, he says:

It is only Christians who believe what reason cunningly concludes to be such foolish things. . . . . For reason will never be able to reconcile itself to this, that three should be one, and one three; that God should be man; that we, when we are dipped in the font, are cleansed from our sins by the blood of Christ; that in bread we eat the body of Christ, in wine drink his blood, and thus receive forgiveness of sins. Such articles of faith are held by the worldly wise to be pure foolishness. But whoso believes shall be blessed.

He describes Paul's teaching of the derivation of human sin from Adam as 'a laughable doctrine,' and asks what can be more ridiculous than that the fact that Adam took a bite of an apple should have the tremendous result of putting all men, to the very end of the world, into the power of death?

For he had committed, he goes on to say, neither murder nor adultery; he had robbed no one, nor blasphemed God, nor committed any of the horrible sins of which the world is now full; but only eaten

the apple, over-persuaded and deceived by the Devil through the woman. Must we then, says reason, make this single apple of so much account that the whole world must pay for it, and so many fine, excellent, wise folk, yea, God's Son himself, with all Prophets, Fathers, and Saints, must die?

To all this, and to much more of the same kind, there is but one answer; let me give it in Luther's own vigorous words:

It is a quality of faith that it wrings the neck of reason and strangles the beast, which else the whole world, with all creatures, could not strangle. But how? It holds to God's word: lets it be right and true, no matter how foolish and impossible it sounds. So did Abraham take his reason captive and slay it, inasmuch as he believed God's word, wherein was promised him that from his unfruitful and as it were dead wife, Sarah, God would give him seed. . . . . There is no doubt faith and reason mightily fell out in Abraham's heart about this matter, yet at last did faith get the better, and overcame and strangled reason, that all-cruellest and most fatal enemy of God. So, too, do all other faithful men who enter with Abraham the gloom and hidden darkness of faith: they strangle reason, ... and thereby offer to God the all-acceptablest sacrifice and service that can ever be brought to him.

But to a mind of the force and vivacity of Luther's—a mind, too, which had measured its individual strength against the prescriptions of centuries, and held its own against a world in arms—the strangling of reason was not an act

to be lightly committed, or to be regarded afterwards without at least passing pangs of remorse. Under certain mythological forms, with which no Christianity in the sixteenth century could dispense, we discern the fact of a perpetual struggle going on in Luther's mind. When his natural reason rebelled against the violence which orthodox faith offered to it, the revolt was ascribed to the direct agency of the Devil, and was contended against as a suggestion from hell. And, as we might infer from the vivid way in which he puts the contrast between reason and the fundamental articles of dogmatic Christianity, Luther felt that his only safety was in clinging to the clear declarations of Scripture. If he lost that hold, he was lost indeed.

Experience, he says, has taught me this only too often: when the Devil attacks me outside the Scripture, and I begin to wander with my own thoughts, and even to flutter up towards heaven, then he brings me to this, that I know not either where God is or I myself am.

Again:

I am myself also a doctor, and have read the Scriptures; yet it comes upon me daily, that if I do not stand straight in my armour, and therewith be well equipped, such thoughts attack me as would make me lose Christ and the gospel: and I must therefore always hold to the Scriptures, that I may continue to stand.

Once more :

All the articles of the Creed are very difficult and high, so that no man can comprehend them without the grace and gift of the Holy Spirit. I speak and witness thereof as one who has had no little experience : wilt thou also gain only a little experience, take any article of the Creed which thou wilt—the incarnation of Christ, the resurrection—so wilt thou keep hold of none if thou graspest it with reason. It has indeed happened to myself that when I have let the Word go, I have lost God and Christ and all together. . . . There is no easier way to lose all articles of the faith than to think of them apart from Scripture.

And in 1524 he confesses, in a very remarkable passage too long to quote, that if, five years before, Dr. Carlstadt or anyone else could have convinced him that the Eucharist was nothing but bread and wine, he would have done him the greatest service. He had suffered the severest temptation in regard to this matter : even now the old Adam in him was inclined to the rationalistic view : and what a blow could he not have struck against the Papacy with the simpler doctrine !

The Devil plays a large part in Luther's life. His faith in Satanic temptation and possession was not only very real and deep, but of a childish simplicity and credulity. Side by side with passages in his published works and familiar letters where he clothes his spiritual throes and tempta-

tions with this mythological form, should be placed the chapter in the Table-talk which shows that his belief in the perpetual and all-pervading energy of Satan was a precise counterpart to his faith in the omnipresent activity of God. But Luther's use of this kind of language at once misleads us as to facts of his life, and tends to hide their real meaning. When we look into it minutely, his personal acquaintance with the Devil, if I may use such a phrase, turns out to have been very slight. He heard noises in his solitary cell in the Wartburg which he could not explain, and an unaccountable scratching behind the stove in his room at Wittenberg. Twice he saw the Evil One in the shape of a great hound. He ascribed to Satanic agency a vision of Christ with the five wounds. The fact is, that to whatever excess of credulity his theories of diabolic activity might push him, his intellect was too robust, his common sense too sound, to make him desire or put faith in visions and apparitions. At the same time, he was subject all his life to conflicts, temptations, tribulations, in which the Devil was a chief actor. The years from 1527 to 1530 were particularly disturbed in this way. Again and again we find the Reformer, usually so full of a courageous cheerfulness, and a perennial spring of comfort to other tried and tempted souls, sunk in the depths of despondency,

pitifully asking for the prayers of his friends, and only painfully and slowly struggling towards a return of light and peace. Nor are these the throes and agonies which, on a system such as his, naturally precede conversion ; or even the after-pains which come to remind the soul of what it has gone through, and to suggest circumspection. They were struggles in which the whole peace of his life was at stake : storms which shook the very foundations of his faith. I do not believe that we can say we understand Luther so long as these dark and bitter hours remain unexplained.

It is only when we turn to Luther's own letters about this period, that a gleam of light begins to break in upon us. At the time of his seclusion in the Wartburg, he complains in strong terms of temptations of the flesh : but there is nothing of that kind now : the trouble is partly spiritual, partly intellectual.

For more than a week, he writes to Melanchthon, I have been tossed about in death and hell : so that, hurt in all my body, I still tremble in every limb. For having almost wholly lost Christ, I was driven about by storms and tempests of despair and blasphemy against God. But God, moved by the prayers of the saints, begins to have pity upon me, and has drawn my soul out of the lower hell.

Again, a few months afterwards, to Nicholas Hausmann :

I truly think that no common devil, but the very

prince of the devils, has risen up against me, so great and so equipped in knowledge of the Scriptures is his power against me: so that unless I held to the word of another, my own knowledge of Scripture would not suffice.

He asks Brenz for the prayers of the church in Halle: 'for Satan, let loose against me, seeks by his devices to rob me of Christ in secret, since he sees that publicly, and in the confession of my faith, he can snatch nothing from me.' He is still in the valley of the shadow when the new year comes. On 1 January, 1528, he writes, that with this kind of conflict he had been familiar from his youth, but had never thought that it would become so sharp.

Christ nevertheless has triumphed so far, though holding me up by ever so little. I commend myself to your prayers, and to those of the brethren. I have saved others, myself I cannot save. Blessed be my Christ, even in the midst of despair, death, and blasphemy; and may he give us to behold one another in his kingdom!

I cannot resist the conclusion that the explanation of these things is to be largely found in such passages of Luther's works as I have already quoted—and they might be multiplied to almost any extent—in which he places faith and reason in vivid and irreconcilable opposition. I do not deny the existence in his tribulation of a purely spiritual element: all deeply religious men have

their times of darkness and despondency; nor was Luther likely to escape the common lot. But he has expressed the difficulties of reason in regard to the orthodox creed in terms far too clear and strong to permit us to doubt, not only that he had himself stood in the rationalist's position, but that it was, in a sense, natural to him. The other position was natural too; for it was that into which he finally settled down; but after what a struggle! If a man who has looked at faith and unfaith with clear eyes says to himself, I will believe, he may succeed in believing; but there will be times at which the tension of his will will suddenly relax, and he will find himself at the mercy of the doubts which he thought he had fought down for ever. I take it that the *Anfechtungen* of 1527 were a turning-point in Luther's life, and therefore in the history of the Reformation. Up to his return from the Wartburg in 1522, to allay the disturbances at Wittenberg created by the Prophets of Zwickau, his intellectual history had been one of continual progress. He was not in 1517, the year of the indulgence theses, the finished Protestant champion which some conceive him: then, and long afterwards, he was quickly working his way forward to a completer apprehension of his characteristic principles and a larger sense of their application. But while his mind kept moving in

answer to Papal opposition, it crystallized under the influence of division and excess among Reformers. First came the Zwickau Prophets, then Carlstadt claiming to better his instruction. The Peasants' War, with the cruelties committed in its suppression, gravely endangered his work. The Swiss Reformers not only denied his doctrine of the Eucharist, but threatened to draw South Germany away after them. Everywhere Anabaptism was developing into various forms of heresy. In a word, the application of reason to religion was bearing its necessary fruits of difference and division : what was there to oppose to the unbroken front of Papal authority, except the uncompromising assertion of the authority of Scripture ? But the adoption of this position was the result, not of any calculation of ecclesiastical expediencies on Luther's part, not even of a calm intellectual estimate of conflicting evidence, but of a terrible struggle in the depths of his fiery soul between two principles, each of which was rooted in his very nature. He saw whither the free working of his own mind would take him, and he dared not make the adventure. He used the weapons of faith to slay reason, lest perchance reason should lure faith to her destruction. But who can tell what might have been the effect upon the Reformation, and the subsequent development of the intellectual life

of Europe, had Luther put himself boldly at the head of the larger and freer thought of his time, instead of using all the force of his genius, all the weight of his authority, to crush it ?

To turn to the second half of our subject, we find the early documents of the Reformation full of brilliant declarations of the rights of conscience. It could not well be otherwise. Only by an appeal to those rights could the Reformers justify their own attitude towards a religious system which, until they attacked it, had commanded the assent of Europe. To insist upon liberty of thought and speech in matters of religion, apart alike from ecclesiastical censure and civil disability, was no more than a measure of necessary self-defence. We cannot be surprised, therefore, to find Luther, in 1519, distinguishing, in his 'Sermon on Excommunication,' between inward and outward church communion, and declaring that of the first none can be deprived 'by any man, be he Bishop or Pope, yea, not by angels or any creature, but only by God himself.' On the other hand, he defends the rights of conscience as stoutly against Kings and Princes. From many passages which illustrate this, I select one or two from his book 'On Temporal Authority, and how far Obedience is due to it,' which bears the date of 1523.

Worldly rule, he says, has laws which do not

extend further than over body and goods, and what is external upon earth. For over souls God can and will suffer no one to rule save himself alone. . . . . Beloved, we are not baptized into the name of Kings, Princes, or Mobs, but into the name of Christ and God only: we are not called after Kings, Princes, or Mobs; we are called Christians. No one can or ought to command the soul, except he who can show it the way to heaven. But that can no man do, but God only. Therefore, in matters which concern the salvation of souls, nothing but God's Word ought to be taught or received.

Again:

A tribunal, when it pronounces judgment, must and ought to be quite certain, and have everything in a clear light. But the thoughts and mind of man can be open to no one but God; wherefore it is futile and impossible to command, or by force to compel, anyone to believe so, or so. There wants another grip for that: force avails nothing. . . . . It is at a man's own risk what he believes, and he must see for himself that he believes rightly. For just as little as another can go for me to hell or heaven, can he for me believe or disbelieve: and just as little as he can open or shut heaven or hell for me, can he drive me to belief or unbelief. . . . . For belief is a free work; thereto can no man be compelled.

In the same way Luther had fully grasped the idea that force can produce only an external conformity.

For the miserable blind people do not see what a quite futile and impossible thing they undertake.

For however straitly they command, however stoutly they rage, they cannot bring people further than to follow them with mouth and hand: the heart they cannot compel, should they even tear at it. For true is the proverb, 'Thoughts are toll-free.'

And last of all:

But thou sayest once more, 'Yea, worldly power cannot compel to belief, but is only an external protection against the people being misled by false doctrine: how else can heretics be kept at bay?' Answer: That is the business of Bishops, to whom the office is entrusted, and not of Princes. For heresy can never be kept off by force: another grip is wanted for that: this is another quarrel and conflict than that of the sword. God's Word must contend here: if that avails nothing, temporal power will never settle the matter, though it fill the world with blood. Heresy is a spiritual thing, which no iron can hew down, no fire burn, no water drown.

Nothing can be clearer or more satisfactory than these declarations, which, it will be observed, cover almost the whole theoretical ground of religious liberty. But it is unhappily one thing to claim liberty for oneself, another to accord it to others; much easier to lay down a general principle than to follow it faithfully into its various practical applications. As we certainly, after the lapse of so many years, have not yet learned either of these lessons thoroughly, we need not wonder that Luther and Melanchthon repeated them with stammering tongues. Their position

was in many respects difficult and painful. They could not confine Protestantism to their own protest. All round about them sprang up a crop of heresies with which they had little or no sympathy, yet for which their Catholic opponents held them responsible. These heresies, from the opinions of Zwingli on the Eucharist, which were shared by all Switzerland and a large part of South Germany, on the one hand, to the Antitrinitarian views of Denck and Campanus, and the wild excesses of the Münster Anabaptists, on the other, were in everyway a hindrance to their successful maintenance of their own position. They did not permit them to show to Catholicism a united front; they embroiled them with Princes naturally jealous of their own authority. I do not wonder that the Reformers of Wittenberg fell into the trap which lies in wait for all earnestly believing men, in the distinction set up between heresy and blasphemy. Is there not a point at which the expression of misbelief becomes an insult to the majesty of God, and so an offence against laws of man? And is not all heresy, in proportion as it is bold and outspoken, likely to be interpreted and punished as blasphemy? Then again, granting that difference of belief is to be tolerated, to what lengths ought toleration to go? Does it include full right of citizenship, with liberty to preach and

print? Or are heretics to be allowed to live side by side with orthodox believers only on condition that they hold their tongues? Is it in any case right to co-operate with them for political or religious purposes? Lastly, it is often difficult to draw Luther's theoretical line between temporal and spiritual things, and to decide to which half of human life—and therefore to which jurisdiction—belong certain opinions, and with them the action in which they necessarily issue. The Peasants' War was a social and political revolt, but it justified itself upon religious grounds: Anabaptism was a system of theological opinion, which often encroached upon accepted principles of social life. It is easy to see that these things necessarily gave occasion to a series of practical questions, which even yet receive various answer from men who profess an equal allegiance to the principle of religious liberty.

The result of the Peasants' War and its suppression was to throw the Reformation very much into the hands of the Princes. From a popular it became largely a political movement. On the one hand, the Princes saw that its effect must be the secularization, to a large extent, of Church property, a process of which they wished to secure the control; on the other, the Reformers, from very dread of being confounded with noisy

and seditious heretics, propounded theories of submission to temporal authority which in some cases, as for instance in that of Bucer, assumed the most servile form. This was not inconsistent with the freest speech on Luther's part about and to worldly rulers: his openly expressed contempt of Duke George finds a parallel in the frank, not to say the rough, way in which he constantly offered his advice to his own Prince, the Elector John. But it is important to note in this connexion the fact, that the reorganization of the Church, which the Reformation rendered necessary, was in almost every case undertaken by the State, and conducted on principles laid down by its head, whoever he might be. We may take as an instance the famous Visitation of the Saxon Churches in 1528, made by Melanchthon, with other commissioners, lay and clerical, under instructions given to them by the Elector. It was naturally unavoidable that, in the course of a reorganization the object of which was to Protestantize what had been the Catholic Church of Saxony, offences against the religious liberties of those who still adhered to the old faith should be committed. Revolutions require and justify revolutionary measures. But the Elector's instructions go a good deal beyond this. Not only were priests who would not conform to lose their benefices, but recalcitrant laymen, who after

instruction were still obstinate, had a time allowed them within which they were to sell their property and then leave the country. 'For although,' said the Elector, 'it is not our intention to bind anyone to what he is to believe and hold, yet will we, for the prevention of mischievous tumult and other inconveniences, suffer neither sect nor separation in our territory.' So in the year before this, we find Melanchthon writing to the Landgrave of Hesse, asking him to decide controversies among preachers by his own authority, and to put down dissensions by the secular arm. The pretext of danger to the public peace was never wanting whenever it was desired to crush a nascent sect or to silence an inconvenient opponent. Nor was this a lesson which arbitrary rulers were at all loth to learn from their favourite theologians.

But the word by which, above all others, the theologians justified attack upon the liberty and sometimes the lives of heretics was blasphemy. I shall not attempt to define blasphemy, or even inquire if it have a definition: it is enough to say that it is the word by which the religious opinions of a minority, if sufficiently unpopular, have always been designated. And in the intellectual tumult to which the Reformation gave rise, many convictions were expressed which would not square with orthodox Protestantism, whether

of the Lutheran or the Zwinglian type. Now we have only to ask, what was the bearing of the four great Reformers to the men who boldly excluded themselves from the Church as they strove to define it? Luther was by far the mildest and most tolerant. I think that, stern and violent as he often was, the tenderness of strength was a part of his character; and I have given in this Lecture reason enough for believing that he was not without a deep personal sympathy with men who could not bring themselves to stifle reason by the hands of faith. It is true that he writes to the Elector John, begging him to silence a certain Hans Mohr, who was spreading Zwinglian opinions in Coburg; while, in another place, he lays down as a rule for the treatment of unbelievers in an evangelical state, that if after instruction they still persist, they are to be made to hold their tongues. But his intolerance chiefly spends itself in violent words. He draws back in horror from inflicting capital punishment in cases of heresy. He writes, in 1528, in reference to Anabaptists:

Yet it is not right, and I think it great pity, that such wretched people should be so miserably slain, burned, cruelly put to death: every one should be allowed to believe what he will. If he believes wrongly, he will have punishment enough in the eternal fire of hell. Why should they be tortured in this life too?—provided always that it is a case of

mistaken belief only, and that they are not also unruly and oppose themselves to the temporal power. Dear God! how soon it happens that one goes astray and falls into the Devil's net! These men should be fought off and withstood with Scripture and God's Word: fire will do very little good.

'I am slow to adopt the judgment of blood,' he says to Link, 'even where it is abundantly deserved.' Such a precedent would be eagerly caught up and abused by the Papists. 'I can in no way,' he goes on, 'admit that false teachers should be put to death: it is enough that they should be banished.' Zwingli, who is in some respects the largest-minded of the Reformers—Zwingli, who speaks of a heaven in which Christians may hope to meet the wise and good of heathen antiquity—had no such scruples. The Anabaptists of Zürich were numerous and stiff-necked, poor and untaught men who could not hold their own in debate against the leaders of the Swiss reform. They were not convinced—what heretic ever is?—by successive disputations, and persisted in both teaching and practising their characteristic doctrine; till in 1529 their leader, Felix Mantz, was solemnly and judicially drowned for his heresy in the Lake of Zürich, dying with the steadfastness of a true martyr. Two others, Jacob Falck and Heinj Reyman, suffered the same fate not long afterwards, with the same

courage and constancy. In 1530, Melanchthon, writing to his friend Frederick Myconius, expresses his opinion on the proper treatment of obstinate heretics in sufficiently clear terms. At the beginning, when he first became acquainted with Storch and his faction, from whom the Anabaptists took their origin, he was, he says, 'foolishly merciful.' But that mood is long past. Sedition ought to be suppressed by the sword. Blasphemers, even if not seditious, should be put to death by the civil magistrate. There were precedents for this course in the Law of Moses. The Christian Emperors employed capital punishment against the Arians: Augustine permitted armed force to be used against the Donatists. What Calvin thought in regard to the duty of repressing heresy by the sharpest methods, he let the world know in the most signal way when, in 1553, he arrested Servetus, who was only a wayfarer in Geneva, and over whom neither he nor the magistrates of that city had a shadow of jurisdiction, and condemned him to the flames. Of this act the 'mild' Melanchthon did not hesitate to express his entire approval.

I have read your work, he writes to Calvin on 14 October, 1554, in which you have lucidly refuted the horrible blasphemies of Servetus, and I thank the Son of God, who has been the arbiter of this your contest. The Church, both now and in

all generations, owes and will owe you a debt of gratitude. I entirely assent to your judgment. And I say, too, that your magistrates did right in that, after solemn trial, they put the blasphemer to death.

But I think we are justified in saying that Luther, who when Servetus paid the penalty of free-thought had been seven years in his grave, would never have written a letter like this.

Things grew far worse in the second generation. It would not be easy to find a parallel to the hatreds of theologians, constantly appealing to, and constantly supported by the civil power, which divided the Protestant Churches of Germany from the death of Luther to the breaking out of the Thirty Years' War. Controversy after controversy arose on comparatively minute points of doctrine, and each gave rise to a literature unequalled in polemical bitterness and vulgarity. It may be doubted whether Lutherans most hated and abused Calvinists or their own dissidents. Little by little these animosities almost took the place of the old hostility to Catholics and Anabaptists. The Flacianists raged against the Philippists: Jena thundered against Wittenberg: whoever would not subscribe every article of ultra-Lutheran orthodoxy was a crypto-Calvinist and therefore a traitor. It is a painful task to watch the bright flame of religious enthusiasm which once lighted all Europe, quickly dying

down into these obscene embers of theological strife ; and when I have told one sad and shameful story, I will gladly turn away from it. Among the foreign theologians who found refuge in England during the reign of Edward VI was John a Lasco, a Pole of noble birth, who had been the friend of Erasmus, who had travelled in Italy, and who had been destined to high ecclesiastical office in his own country. Under the patronage of Cranmer, he had gathered together in London, in that Church of Austin Friars which, having happily escaped the Great Fire, still stands, a congregation of foreigners, whom he was permitted to organize on the Presbyterian type, and who adopted the Genevese theology. With the accession of Mary, all this came to an end, and a Lasco, with a large part of his congregation, fled beyond sea. They embarked for Denmark in two small Danish ships which they found lying in the Thames, and to that zealously Lutheran country confidently looked for refuge and welcome. Late in the autumn they arrived, but were warned that they might not so much as land unless they would repeat the Lutheran shibboleths. It did not matter that they were flying from Catholic intolerance : Lutheran hearts were shut against Calvinist sufferers. All appeals were fruitless : the people of Copenhagen were friendly enough ; it was the King and the preachers

who would have none of them. So during almost the whole of a stormy northern winter, these poor creatures, among whom were many women and children, were driven from port to port: Rostock expelled them; Wismar allowed them a brief respite, making them the while the object of abusive preaching; Lübeck turned them out; Hamburg raged against them with special bitterness; at last at Emden they found a little rest. The very seas and storms were kinder to them than those who ought to have been their brethren. Calvin, who was at this very moment burning Servetus, raised a loud voice of protest, for the sufferers were his fellow-believers; but I cannot find that any word of remonstrance came from Wittenberg. It was but in 1553: so soon had died away even the faintest echo of that claim of liberty of conscience in which the Reformation took its birth: so soon had new and more savage theological hatreds replaced the old.

V

THE REFORMATION IN ENGLAND

It may have already excited some surprise that an English writer treating of the Reformation should not have selected the movement in his own country as typical, and arranged other manifestations of the same kind according to their various relations to it. Such a procedure would have had the obvious advantage of dealing at the outset with known personages and familiar controversies, and forces still in visible operation. But it would have been, in the first place, to reverse the order of history. The German and Swiss Reformations not only preceded the English, but exercised upon it definite attractions and repulsions. And, next, the English Reformation, both in its method and in its result, is a thing by itself, taking its place in no historical succession, and altogether refusing to be classified. When a laborious German compiler enumerates the English among the Reformed Churches

which own a Genevan origin, and puts the Thirty-nine Articles under the name of the *Confessio Anglicana*, side by side with the Helvetic and Belgic Confessions, an Anglican Churchman, who is not angry, can only be amused. And in truth such a procedure is conspicuously unfaithful to historical fact. Lutheran, Calvinistic, perhaps even Zwinglian, lines of influence upon the English Reformation may be traced without difficulty; but there was a native element stronger than any of these which at once assimilated them and gave its own character to the result. That after the lapse of three centuries and a half it is still possible to discuss whether the English Church is Protestant or Catholic, that characteristic parties within her pale eagerly claim one name and angrily repudiate the other, sufficiently shows that the Reformation in England followed no precedents, and was obedient only to its own law of development.

At the same time it was due to the same general causes as the Reformation in Germany and Switzerland. Here, too, there had been a genuine though ineffectual movement of reform before the time of change had fully come. John Wyclif exercised a far wider influence upon the English nation than the isolated thinkers of Germany: he was a popular teacher in a great University: he enjoyed the support of a party in the state: he

was involved in public struggle with the hierarchy : his polemical works as well as his translation of the Scriptures, had a wide circulation. He was a Reformer in the distinctest sense of the word, upholding the principles, in many cases preaching the precise doctrines, with which Luther afterwards shook the world. That he was suppressed, may be traced to a concurrence of causes not now necessary to be enumerated ; but had England been ripe for reformation, the process of suppression would not have been as decisive as it was. It was the advent of the new learning that rekindled the flame. England caught the fire of classical enthusiasm from Italy almost as soon as Germany, and perhaps more eagerly. What can be more significant than the fact that it was to Oxford that Erasmus, unable to make the Italian pilgrimage on which he had set his heart, came to learn Greek ? In the last years of the fifteenth, the first of the sixteenth century, his is the name which is a link between English and Continental scholarship : he enjoys the Patronage of Henry VII and Archbishop Warham : he is constantly going backwards and forwards between England and the Continent : he teaches at Cambridge the Greek which he has learned at Oxford : he knits friendships with the best scholars and most liberal thinkers of his time—Grocyn, Linacre, Colet, More : to his caustic

pen we owe vivid descriptions of the great English shrines at the very moment when desecration was hanging over them: it is from England that he hastens to Basel to print the New Testament in Greek. Colet never left the Church of Rome: More died a martyr for its claim of supremacy: with reformation, as Luther preached it, Erasmus had no sympathy. But these men were not the ess the precursors of the great coming change that they could not foresee it, and would willingly have made it other than it was.

It is difficult to say what the course of reformation in Saxony might have been, had the successive Electors not been men who were able to understand the grandeur of Luther's aims, and yielded themselves to the fascination of his enthusiasm; but it is instructive to note that the moment Duke George died, his people fell joyfully and all but unanimously into the general current. But an unpleasant truth, which I think an impartial inquirer cannot help gathering from the records of the English Reformation, is, that its motive power was at least as much political as religious, and that the tone which it took and the rapidity of its progress depended more upon the caprices of a line of arbitrary princes than upon the serious convictions of the people. I do not mean that there were not at Oxford and Cambridge men who were earnestly studying the Scriptures

for themselves ; merchants in London, enlightened and steady friends of the new learning ; a secret leaven of Wyclif's influence working beneath the surface ; simple and devout souls upon whom light shone from Wittenberg, or directly from the pages of the New Testament. Without these, the Reformation in England would hardly deserve the name of a religious movement at all ; and amid discouragements, persecutions, martyrdoms, the force which they exercised gathered energy and persistence as years passed on. But the story is sullied at the beginning by the scandal of the Divorce, and it takes a deeper dye when Ann Boleyn's head falls on the scaffold, and no man ventures to say that she is innocent. What a sad and shameful story is that of the suppression of the monasteries, and the wasteful distribution of Church lands, under Henry and Edward, to feed the necessities of the Crown and glut the greed of a crowd of hungry courtiers ! All through these Tudor times the tide of Reformation ebbs and flows, as the Monarch wills : now Henry is the Defender of the Faith against Luther, and now is urgent that Melanchthon should undertake the task of English Reformation : he is Protestant in the assertion of his own supremacy, Catholic in his adhesion to sacramental doctrine : the translation of the Bible is promoted or retarded as his royal caprice dictates : and when he has

swept the wealth of the monasteries into his coffers, he issues the Six Articles, and burns the heretics who deny the Real Presence. I will not inflict upon you the familiar story of the fluctuations of religious policy under Edward, Mary, Elizabeth: the strange thing is, how little the nation counts for, how much the Prince. It is true that the tide was slowly rising all the time, and that each successive wave carried it higher on the shore; till Mary found that she could not burn heresy out of her people's hearts, and Elizabeth, that the surest way to their love was to put herself at the head of the Protestant coalition against Spain. But it is impossible not to feel that, had Edward lived, or Mary taken less counsel of her Spanish husband, the course of Reformation in England might have been very different. No wonder that when Mary's death extinguished the fires in Smithfield, the people threw up their caps for Elizabeth; but they had acclaimed the principle of legitimacy in her sister just as loudly, and preferred her Catholicism, which they had not yet convicted of cruelty, to the Protestantism of an amiable pretender.

On this account it is that the English Reformation produced no great heroes of faith. It has no name to set beside those of Luther, Melanchthon, Zwingli, Calvin, Knox. It called forth no commanding soul able to raise and rule the whirlwind

of popular enthusiasm. I have sometimes thought that its noblest name is that of William Tyndale, the Gloucestershire scholar, who, after much study and many searchings of heart, resolved to give his life to the translation of the Bible into the vulgar tongue. Some theologian, disputing with him while he was yet young, said, 'We were better without God's law than the Pope's.' 'If God spare me life,' was the reply, 'ere many years I will cause the boy that driveth the plough to know more of the Scripture than you do.' It was a pledge that could not be redeemed in England; but it was nobly redeemed amid perils and hairbreadth 'scapes in Germany and the Low Countries, until the Reformer, who meanwhile had flooded his native country with New Testaments, was basely betrayed into the Emperor's hands, and in 1536, without a word of remonstrance from the England on which he had conferred so priceless a gift, strangled and burnt at Vilvoorde. There is no stain of base compliance upon that name: from the first moment of self-devotion to his great purpose to his last dying prayer, 'Lord, ope the King of England's eyes,' all is strong, constant, pious, pure. But it needs much special pleading to make a hero of Cranmer. His was the mind of an ecclesiastical lawyer rather than a divine: apt to find compromises and to abide in expe-

diences, rather than able to think out a principle, and to recognize it as a thing to be defended, if need be, at the cost of life. Who is not moved at the recollection of the old man's hand, stretched out in his last agony into the cleansing flame? But history sternly demands her due, and will not suffer the pathos of that hour to wipe out the recollection of many doubtful deeds, of many shameful acquiescences, of even the last fruitless attempt to buy life at the price of recantation. Recantation, it must be confessed, is a stain upon the garments of too many English Reformers. Some who were afterwards faithful—Garrett, Barnes, Bilney, Bainham—had borne the faggot in their hour of weakness. In his earlier days even Latimer had recanted. A short durance in the Fleet had persuaded Hooper of the lawfulness of episcopal vestments. We must in justice own that it was very difficult to move in step with a revolution which arbitrary Princes assumed the right to hasten or retard. To cross either Henry VIII or any of his children was a dangerous thing, and their means of swift punishment were as effectual as their resentment was sudden and sharp. If we except some of the humbler sufferers for the new truth, whose fate history passes by with brief but compassionate record, I am not sure that the purest honours of martyrdom do not rest upon the heads of Fisher and of More.

What there was of Reformation under Henry VIII chiefly consisted in the spoliation of the monasteries and the substitution of the Royal for the Papal supremacy. The former was so entirely a financial expedient, as to be altogether unworthy of notice in any religious connexion: whatever may have been the sins and laxities of the monasteries, no one who looks at the character of the King, the agents whom he employed, and the uses to which the proceeds were put, can believe that they were dissolved for that reason. But we shall altogether miss the peculiarity of the English Reformation if we regard the Royal supremacy as an arbitrary invention of Henry's, suggested to him, perhaps forced upon him, by the difficulties of the Divorce. From the Norman Conquest downward, the Pope had never taken tax and toll in England without more or less protest, and except under conditions. In virtue of its insular position—on the verge of the great European Commonwealth, yet only in part belonging to it—a certain quasi-imperial dignity attached to England, and the Archbishop of Canterbury was *alterius orbis Papa*. Throughout the whole medieval period, there is a constant record of struggle between King and Pope, with the maintenance of which, whatever influence we may ascribe to the character of successive monarchs, the existence of free institutions had much to

do. However self-willed the King, however caught in the necessities of foreign politics, it could not be without importance that the great Councils of the nation afforded opportunity for the formation and expression of public opinion on matters that concerned all citizens. The struggle of Rufus and Henry I with Anselm, the struggle of Henry II with Becket, the Constitutions of Clarendon, the Statute of Mortmain, the Statute of Provisors, the Statute of Præmunire, all mark as many epochs in this unintermitted warfare. The King established the right of investing Bishops with their temporalities; criminous clerks were compelled to submit themselves to the civil tribunals; the accumulation of wealth in the hands of the Church was checked; appeals to Rome were restrained; Papal bulls might not be brought into England, nor Papal legates allowed to land, without permission. These statements probably express the maximum of national demand, rather than the actual amount of Papal concession at any given moment: on both sides rights were always reserved, claims always renewed; the Popes of high spirit and arbitrary temper knew how to avail themselves of the political necessities of Kings, as when Alexander III absolved Henry II of the murder of Becket, or Innocent III sent Pandulf to restore England to John as a Papal fief. Nor, especially

in the fight for patronage, was right always on the side of royalty: if the Pope sometimes thrust into English Sees Italian ecclesiastics who unblushingly spent their revenues in Rome, the King often kept bishoprics vacant, that the income might find its way into his own coffers; while, between the two, the rights of chapters dwindled almost to nothing. Still the formal assumption of supremacy by Henry VIII was but the last stage of a process which had been going on for almost five hundred years. It was an act that could be defended by many precedents, and was fully in accord with national feeling. When Henry dexterously turned the acceptance of the clergy of Wolsey's legatine authority into a pretext for inflicting the penalties of præmunire upon the whole English Church—a position from which it extricated itself only by the payment of an enormous fine—his conduct may have been criticized as arbitrary and even treacherous, but it was never impugned as illegal. And it is curious to note how Mary, when in the last year of her reign she was more than ever anxious to show her devotion to the Pope and to reconcile England with the Holy See, ordered the bearer of a red hat to her confessor William Peto to be stopped at Calais, because Paul IV had also appointed him to supersede as legate her cousin and favourite, Reginald Pole.

Under Wolsey there had been some faint beginnings of disciplinary reform. He had received his legatine authority from Rome, with full acquiescence of the King and Archbishop Warham, in the intention of cleansing the Augean stable of the ecclesiastical courts. Perhaps we may take his application of monastic property to educational purposes in Oxford and Ipswich as a step in the same direction. But he was too much of an international politician, too intent on his own far-reaching schemes of ambition, to bend to the homelier task of reforming abuses which had become inveterate in the Church. On the other hand, Henry, in the latter part of his reign, was quite content with the confiscation of the monastic estates and the establishment of his own supremacy. In all the controversies which I have on a former occasion indicated as critical, he took the Catholic side. There are four documents, published during his reign, which set forth, with a clearness that left nothing to be desired, what his subjects were to believe: the Ten Articles of 1536; the 'Institution of a Christian Man,' or Bishop's Book, of the same year; the Six Articles of 1539; and 'The necessary Doctrine and Erudition for any Christian Man,' or King's Book, of 1544. And the colour of all these is decisively Catholic. The Six Articles, 'the whip with six strings,' as the Protestants

called it, laid down as necessary matters of belief and practice the Real Presence, communion in one kind, the celibacy of the priesthood, the obligation of vows, the lawfulness of private Masses, and the expediency of auricular confession. This was the doctrinal bond within which the nascent Protestantism of England groaned, until the accession of Edward gave it liberty of expansion. The same fact comes out in relation to certain friendly overtures which, for political reasons, Henry made to the Protestants of Germany. In 1538 and 1539 a German embassy was in England, conferring with Cranmer and other divines as to the possibility of a common basis of faith. But it was of no avail. The Germans stood by the Confession of Augsburg, between which and the doctrine of the 'Institution of a Christian Man' there could be no reconciliation. England was still Catholic.

The reign of Edward VI opened another era. The old learning at once gave place to the new. The pent-up stream of Protestant doctrine and feeling burst its bounds and carried all before it. Communications were opened with the Reformed Churches of the Continent, and Cranmer even entertained the dream of a federated Protestantism. The year of Edward's accession was that of the Battle of Mühlberg, and the consequent imposition upon Protestant Germany of the

semi-Catholic regime known as the Interim, disposed many theologians of name to betake themselves to a country where the hope of reformation stood so high. Bucer and Fagius were invited from Strasburg to teach at Cambridge: Peter Martyr, Dryander, Tremellio, were active at Oxford: John a Lasco established in the city of London a Presbyterian community, rigid in doctrine, well organized in discipline: Calvin wrote long letters of advice and exhortation to the Protector Somerset, and after his fall, to the King. The refugees, the colour of whose theology was more Calvinistic than Lutheran, were Cranmer's trusted friends and counsellors: many of them lived with him at Lambeth, sitting at his table and sharing his secret thoughts. And it was while this foreign influence—the influence, be it remembered, of trained dogmatic theologians—was at its height, that the English Prayer Book was shaped and the foundation laid of the Thirty-nine Articles.

At the same time, in order that we may not lay too much stress on these circumstances, we must take some pains to understand a fact which more than any other differentiates the English Reformation—I mean the continuity of the Anglican Church. There is no point at which it can be said, here the old Church ends, here the new begins. Are you inclined to take the Act of

Supremacy as such a point? I have already shown that Henry's assumption of headship was but the last decisive act of a struggle which had been going on for almost five centuries. The retention of the Episcopate by the English Reformers at once helped to preserve this continuity and marked it in the distinctest way. I speak here as an historian, not as a theologian, and I have nothing to do with that doctrine of apostolical succession which many Churchmen hold, though the Articles do not teach and the Prayer Book only implies it. But it is an obvious historical fact that Parker was the successor of Augustine, just as clearly as Lanfranc and Becket. Warham, Cranmer, Pole, Parker—there is no break in the line, though the first and third are claimed as Catholic, the second and fourth as Protestant. The succession, from the spiritual point of view, was most carefully provided for when Parker was consecrated: not even the most ignorant controversialist now believes in the Nag's-Head fable. The canons of the pre-Reformation Church, the statutes of the Plantagenets, are binding upon the Church of England to-day, except where they have been formally repealed. There has been no break, unless by what we may call private circumstances, in the devolution of Church property. The Church may be Protestant now, as it undoubtedly was Catholic

once ; but it is impossible to fix the point at which the transition was legally and publicly made.

A great force has been exerted in the same direction by the principles on which the Service Book was compiled. Something had been done in Henry's reign to provide the people with a form of worship in their own tongue ; the Litany had been translated, a Scripture lesson every Sunday and holy-day ordered to be read in English. But when, on the accession of Edward, Cranmer set about the task of providing an English Prayer Book, it was to the ancient ritual of the country that he turned for his materials. The medieval custom had not been uniform : there were many 'Uses,' as they were called : the Use of Bangor, the Use of Lincoln, the Use of York. But in the eleventh century, a great ritual reformer, Osmund, Bishop of Salisbury, had so improved the Use of Sarum as to have secured for it a preference over all others. And the Use of Sarum is the basis of the Prayer Book. The Breviary, its eight daily services compressed into two, furnished the order of matins and evensong ; the Missal, with certain necessary alterations, of the Communion Service. Some guidance was afforded to the compilers by the Breviary of Cardinal Quignon, a bold attempt at reformation made, not without Papal sanction, in 1536, but superseded by the labours of the

Council of Trent. On the other hand, in the very stronghold of the Catholic party in the Church are to be found traces of Protestant influence. Cranmer and his colleagues made considerable use of a work called the 'Consultation' of Herman von Wied, that Elector Archbishop of Cologne who all but succeeded in Protestantizing his diocese. This book contained, with other matter, a directory of public worship, which, as it was the work of Melanchthon and Bucer, was distinctly framed upon a Lutheran model. In Edward VI's reign, however, events marched quickly. The set of the party of movement was away from ancient methods of belief and devotion. The doctrinal Protestants naturally thought that the new book retained too much of the Catholic leaven. The influence of the foreign refugees made itself felt: the opinion of Bucer and Peter Martyr, formally asked, was in favour of a still further departure from Catholic standards. The result was the Prayer Book of 1552, commonly known as the second of Edward VI. But this marks the highest flood-tide of Protestant feeling. The changes made in the Elizabethan Prayer Book of 1559 were intended to conciliate Anglo-Catholics; and the revision of 1662 worked, as far as it went, in the same direction.

The history of the Articles runs parallel with that of the Prayer Book. The formation of both

practically belongs to the reign of Edward ; while both underwent a revision, by which no essential feature was altered, in that of Elizabeth. But while the materials of the Prayer Book were quarried in the mines of English medieval piety, those of the Articles were largely derived from foreign sources. That the Thirty-nine Articles contain many points of likeness to the Confession of Augsburg, no one who is familiar with both can doubt : not only are the verbal resemblances many and striking, but the two evidently belong to the same class of document. The actual link of connexion between them has recently been discovered in a copy of the Thirteen Articles drawn up by Cranmer when the German Embassy visited England in 1538 and 1539. Then it was impossible to come to any terms, and the Six Articles of 1539 sufficiently tell us why. In 1553, things were in a very different position. Protestantism, though not of the Lutheran type, was in the ascendant in England. Had a second attempt been made to treat with Wittenberg, it might have been the Saxon Reformers who would have held off. And by this time, too, Cranmer had given up his idea of a federated Protestantism, and was content to frame a national Confession for the use of his own Church. In 1553, therefore, were promulgated the Forty-two Articles, which, ten years later revised and reduced in number

to Thirty-nine, were formally adopted by Queen and Church, and have ever since been subscribed by all clerics. The Confession as a whole resembles all similar documents, in bearing plain traces of contemporary controversies in which it was thought necessary to speak with decisive voice: of the suppressed Articles, seven in number, four referred to heresies of the Anabaptist type, which seem to have abated in virulence in the ten years intervening between the first and second form of the document. And it is an additional proof of the foreign origin of the Articles, that much of the new matter added in 1563 was taken from the Confession of Würtemberg, a document presented to the Council of Trent in 1551, which is only the Confession of Augsburg in a slightly altered form.

The years of reaction under Mary may be dismissed with brief mention. It is true that they had a serious influence upon the temper of the nation. If it was a significant thing that Mary's well-known Catholicism was no bar to her almost unanimous and even enthusiastic acceptance by the people, it was equally significant that the measures of her Spanish and Papal advisers wore English loyalty threadbare. The result was that Elizabeth ascended the throne much more in the character of a Protestant champion than her own convictions and inclinations would have

dictated. She was indeed the daughter of Ann Boleyn, who by this time Protestants were beginning to regard as a martyr of the faith; but she was also the child of Henry VIII, and the heiress of his imperious will. Soon, however, she found herself Protestant almost in her own despite. The Papacy, in the first pride of successful reaction, offered her only the alternative of submission or excommunication, and she did not for a moment hesitate to choose the latter. Then commenced that long and close alliance between Catholicism and domestic treason which is so differently judged as it is approached from the religious or the political side. These seminary priests, who in every various disguise came to England, moving secretly about from manor-house to manor-house, celebrating the rites of the Church, confirming the wavering, consoling the dying, winning back the lapsed to the fold, too well acquainted with Elizabeth's prisons, and often finding their way to her scaffolds—what are they but the intrepid missionaries, the self-devoted heroes of a proscribed faith? On the other hand, the Queen is excommunicate, an evil woman, with whom it is not necessary to keep faith, to depose whom would be the triumph of the Church, whose death, however compassed, its occasion: how easy to weave plots under the cloak of religious intercourse,

and to make the unity of the faith a conspiracy of rebellion! The next heir to the throne, Mary of Scotland, was a Catholic, and, as long as she lived, a perpetual centre of domestic and European intrigue: plot succeeded plot, in which the traitorous subtlety was all Catholic—the keenness of discovery, the watchfulness of defence, all Protestant. Then, too, the shadow of Spanish supremacy began to cast itself broadly over Europe: the unequal struggle with Holland was still prolonged: it was known that Philip's dearest wish was to recover to his empire and the Church the island kingdom which had once unwillingly accepted his rule. It was thus the instinct of self-defence which placed Elizabeth at the head of the Protestant interest in Europe: she sent Philip Sidney to die at Zutphen: her sailor-buccaneers, whether there were peace at home or not, bit and tore at everything Spanish upon the southern main: till at last, in 1588, Philip gathered up all his naval strength and hurled the Armada at our shores. *Afflavit Deus, et dissipati sunt.* The valour of England did much; the storms of heaven the rest. Mary of Scotland had gone to her death the year before, and her son had been trained to hate his mother's faith. There could be no question any more of the fixed Protestantism of the English people.

It might seem, at first sight, as if the period

of Reformation in England ceased at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign. The Prayer Book as then settled is, notwithstanding the revision of 1662, substantially the same as that which is used now. The Articles of 1563 have since undergone no alterations and are still binding. The peculiar churchmanship of Parker, who believed in the continuity of the Church of England, who maintained the right of a national communion to reform itself, who clung to historical and antiquarian precedents, who held little intercourse with foreign Protestants and distrusted what he called 'Germanical natures,' is a type of churchmanship much in vogue just now. But, in truth, the Reformation in England was a case of arrested development, and Elizabeth's settlement, a compromise which came too soon. The popular movement, that which inspired the enthusiasm of preachers and the constancy of martyrs, had always been eagerly Protestant, demanding doctrinal as well as disciplinary reform, adopting in earlier days the Lutheran, afterwards the Calvinistic type of belief, and not sparing of dislike and contempt of Catholic usage and worship. The men who belonged to this party had no sympathy with the reluctance of others in high places to break away from old precedents: to them, the continuity of the Church was a matter of indifference: what some called com-

pliance with decent custom, they flatly qualified as idolatry: they asked that the new truth which God had given should be enthusiastically accepted and carried to its full issue in worship and practice. These were the theologians who in Edward's reign had been in closest intercourse with the Reformers of the Continent, and who, when Mary succeeded, knowing that they were compromised beyond recall, fled over seas till the storm should abate. They found refuge chiefly in Switzerland and the cities of the Rhineland which were under Swiss religious influence, and, after five years' exile, came back more Calvinistic than they went, more enamoured of Presbyterian discipline, more eager to continue the work of Reformation interrupted by the death of Edward. To these Marian exiles the Elizabethan settlement was a deep discouragement. They submitted with but an ill-grace to ceremonies which they looked upon as relics of Popery, and an episcopal rule which they did not think scriptural, and applied themselves to the task of changing from within a church the legal foundations of which they were unable to undermine.

Nothing can show so conclusively that the Anglican churchmanship of Parker and his associates was more the theory of a few learned men in high places than the serious conviction

of the nation, as the gradual gathering of Puritan strength, and still more the growing prevalence of Calvinistic theology, during the long reign of Elizabeth. Notwithstanding the Queen's well-known Catholic preferences, and her determination to stand by the settlement of religion which she had made—notwithstanding the establishment of the Court of High Commission, the very purpose of which was to enforce uniformity, and which was sufficiently harsh and arbitrary in its methods—Puritanism spread in every diocese. In 1577, Grindal, Parker's successor in the Primacy, refused to suppress the 'Prophesyings,' or meetings for religious conference, which were the chief means of disseminating Puritan opinions, and was in consequence sequestrated from his See. Whitgift, who followed him, had no scruples as to putting down sectaries; but, on the other hand, it was he who devised the Nine Lambeth Articles of 1595, in which the five points of Calvinism were laid down with uncompromising rigidity. It is true that they were never imposed upon the English Church; but what a strange drawing together of Canterbury and Geneva was this! While Whitgift was still Archbishop, James I succeeded Elizabeth. The Puritans, knowing his Presbyterian education, fondly thought that their hour was come, and met him on his way from Edinburgh with what is known as the Millenary

Petition, asking for the abolition of the usages against which they had so long protested. But the Hampton Court Conference showed that the King had learned to know Presbyterianism only to hate it; and the ecclesiastical situation remained unchanged, except that a foolish and obstinate pedant sat in the seat of a woman who, if often wilful, loved her people and received their love in return. Still Calvinism was in the ascendant. James himself sent representatives to the Synod of Dordt, who approved the rigidly Calvinistic confession which it enacted against Arminian heresy. Abbot, who was Primate from 1611 to 1633, though he used the powers of the Court of High Commission against the Puritans, was in doctrinal sympathy with them, and contended less for Catholic theory and usage than for the general maintenance of authority. It was with Bishop Andrews, whom many men had wished to see in the Primacy in Abbot's place, and with Laud, who actually succeeded Abbot, that the reaction began. They were Anglicans of a higher type than even Parker, men whom modern Anglo-Catholics revere, the one as a saint, the other as a martyr. Accusations of personal unfaithfulness to the Church of England were freely made against Laud, and his ecclesiastical principles were attacked as logically leading to Rome. But the fairer criticism of modern times

has decided that at least the former charge was unfounded, and that Laud faithfully kept that *via media* in which so many pious feet have of late years learned to walk. In him there was a reversion to the churchmanship of a time when foreign influence had not yet made itself decisively felt on the English Reformation, and Puritanism was not; a churchmanship which learned its doctrine from the 'Institution of a Christian Man,' and drew its devotion from the Use of Sarum, and for the enforcement of uniformity, returned to the methods of the Tudors. For the moment, the reaction came too late: Laud died upon the scaffold; the Westminster Confession took the legal place of the Articles, the Directory, of the Prayer Book; till, after but an instant's partial prevalence, both were swept away by triumphant Independency. But such a victory bore in itself the seeds of defeat; and when 1661 came, the demands of the Presbyterians at the Savoy Conference were almost contemptuously rejected; the Act of Uniformity brought organized Dissent to the birth; and the Caroline Bishops trod in the footsteps, not of Whitgift or of Abbot, but of Laud.

I am not concerned to vindicate either the character or the aims of Puritanism; it is sufficient to have affiliated it on the true stock of the Reformation. Now, after two centuries and a half,

historical students whose judgment is not disturbed by the fascination of old controversies in new forms, are beginning to discern that the roots of all that is noble in English life to-day go down to Roundhead and Cavalier alike, and that piety and learning were not the monopoly of either Churchman or Puritan. Let George Herbert the Anglican, Colonel Hutchinson the Independent, Lord Falkland the Latitudinarian, stand side by side as the best that that troubled time could produce, and let each of us leave it to the force of natural attraction to adjust the order of their precedence. One word only I would say as to the charge of pettiness in controversy often brought against the Puritan party. What they perpetually asked from Elizabeth and her Bishops, what they begged of James I at the Hampton Court Conference, what they urged upon the triumphant Church of the Restoration, touched the same points: the kneeling posture at the Lord's Supper, the sign of the cross in baptism, the use of the surplice, the bowing at the name of Jesus, the reading of apocryphal lessons. All external things, it will be said; things indifferent to a man of robust conscience who can look below the surface into the essence of controversies; certainly not matters upon which to divide a church and rend a nation in twain. Nor am I prepared to deny that in the course of a hundred

years during which these ceremonies were in dispute, they assumed the nature of shibboleths, became standards of bitter contention rather than matters of reasonable debate, and were eagerly defended or assailed by many who had no real conception of their significance. But a glance at the list which I have given sufficiently shows that these ceremonies had to the Puritan a very definite symbolic meaning. They stood for the old Church, for its authority over Scripture, for its doctrine of the Real Presence, for its theory of priests and sacraments. Looked at in this light, the external conformity which was asked of the Puritans involved a transition from the Protestant to the Catholic side of the Reformation. It meant the substitution of the authority of the Church for the authority of Scripture and Conscience.

From what has been said, it will be plain that from the first, two distinct elements have been present in the English Church, sometimes struggling for the mastery, sometimes living peacefully side by side, and that it is contrary to historical fact for either to assert itself in such a way as to exclude the other. Whether they can be brought into logical accord, is a question with which I do not presume to meddle. Evangelicals interpret, in a way satisfactory to themselves, the Ordinal and the Baptismal Service; while

John Henry Newman, following in Tract 90 the steps of Sancta Clara, has sought to give the Articles a Catholic sense. I am only adopting the theological nomenclature of the day, and at the same time conforming to historical fact when I call these elements Catholic and Protestant. It is the peculiarity of the Church of England that she is both. Apply to her the test which I laid down in a former Lecture, the belief in sacramental religion and the possession of a sacerdotal order, and she is Catholic. She has priests who in virtue of episcopal ordination exercise the mysterious power of forgiving sins, and sacraments which only duly ordained priests can administer. Yet in the Articles we find a confession of faith in closest relation with the Confession of Augsburg, and which in contents and in history alike takes its place among the symbolic documents of the Reformation. On one side we have the national character of the movement, the theoretical continuity of the Church of England, the uninterrupted episcopal succession, the Prayer Book drawn from medieval sources, the Catholic preferences of Henry and Elizabeth, the Anglican churchmanship of Parker : on the other, the light kindled from Wittenberg, the popular revolt against Catholic superstition and abuse, the doctrinal Protestantism of the Universities, the influence of Cranmer's foreign

advisers, the Calvinistic zeal of the Marian exiles, the enthusiasm of a newly acquired faith, which was careless of old usage, and did not fear to contemplate revolution. These were the two forces which Elizabeth sought to compel to live together on terms prescribed by the Prayer Book of 1559 and the articles of 1563. How premature the compromise was, the history of every subsequent century sufficiently shows. The growth of Puritanism, the reaction under Andrews and Laud, the triumph of Presbyterianism in the Westminster Assembly of Divines, and the usurpation of power by the Independents of the army, were only the first stages of the struggle. The Restoration re-established the Church on a footing which Laud would have heartily approved, and Puritanism could reappear only in the form of persecuted Dissent. On the other hand, the Revolution settlement involved the High-church secession of the Non-jurors ; while the Evangelical revival of almost a century later called forth, as its first strength began to wane, the Oxford movement, and that Anglo-Catholic fervour which has so greatly raised the present tone of Church doctrine and ritual. All this constitutes an historical phenomenon quite different from that presented by any of the Reformed Churches of the Continent. The development of Lutheranism, the development of Calvinism, have been simple

and homogeneous. It is possible to speak of the Lutheran Church of Germany, of the Calvinistic Church of Scotland, in terms that shall be applicable to either as a whole. But only within narrow limits can we apply descriptive epithets to the Church of England, which will not be angrily repudiated by one of her two opposed yet equally characteristic parties.

I cannot speak in terms too strong of the efficacy of the Prayer Book as a connecting link between the medieval Church and the Church of to-day. It would not be true to say that all parties in the Church are equally attached to it; but its hold even upon those worshippers who are least in accord with its doctrinal implications is enormous; and recent events seem to show that the tenderest measure of revision is only a distant possibility. I have often heard churchmen confess that it supplies the only form in which they can happily worship; while those who have not been nurtured upon it freely admit the charm of its grave piety, its chastened ardour, the solemn harmony of its periods, the completeness of its adaptation to the daily needs of devotion. If we admit the propriety of making creeds in any case a constituent of worship, it is well that the Prayer Book should recite no national or local confession, but the symbols of the ancient Church. But it certainly has not been possible to draw

from the fountains of medieval devotion, without at the same time adopting to some extent a medieval theology. Nothing short of complete remodelling could have made the Use of Sarum speak the language of Luther or of Calvin. The function of the priest is not that of the minister, the words descriptive of the one fail in applicability to the other. Luther formulates the Protestant principle when, in words which I have already quoted, he declares that whoever is qualified to administer the sacraments, becomes so in virtue of the congregation's choice, and when deposed is but as other men. With this, the idea of the priest, who receives an indelible priesthood at the hands of a Bishop, and to whom is committed the very power of Christ in the forgiveness of sins, cannot by any device of logic or rhetoric be reconciled. On the other hand, much pains have been bestowed to prove that the articles are not Calvinistic. I do not now allude to Newman's attempt to put a Catholic meaning upon them: that was a logical *tour de force* which convinced only those who were waiting to be convinced. But men who desire to dissociate as far as possible the English from the German and the Swiss Reformations, have advanced the theory that the Articles, especially the seventeenth, are really Augustinian, and that their doctrinal origin is to be sought rather in

the fifth century than in the sixteenth. In so far as this is a debate of names and epithets, I shall not try to settle it. It should not be forgotten that Augustine, Luther, Calvin, whatever their minor differences, were all doctors in the same school of theology, and that the Reformers exulted in sitting at the feet of the great African Father. Calvin differed from Luther chiefly in the relentless logical precision with which he had worked them out and co-ordinated them into a system. We may be thankful that the seventeenth article is less minutely rigid in its tone, less cruelly inclusive in its scope, than it would have been if Calvin had dictated it. But nothing, it seems to me, can be doctrinally or historically plainer than that the theology of the Thirty-nine Articles is the theology of the Confession of Augsburg. What that was, and what possibilities of development lay within it, is plainly indicated by the Nine Lambeth Articles approved by Archbishop Whitgift. Happy was it for the Church of England that she was content to abide by the settlement of 1563!

It would, however, be much less than just to assume that the convinced and logical adherents of these two schools of thought together make up the Church of England, and have alone given it its characteristic colour. From various causes,

the obligation of its formularies has lain lightly on the shoulders of many of its most loyal children. Its national character, which, if denied by the collector of contemporary statistics, no fair student of history will question, and the obvious compromise involved in the settlement of Elizabeth, have justified some thoughtful men in taking up a position intermediate between the extremes of Catholic and Protestant theory. They have looked upon the Prayer Book as a manual of devotion which they were bound to use, but upon which they might put their own meaning. They have regarded the Articles as Articles of peace, or as terms of comprehension, or as settlements of contemporary controversies, rather than as a Confession of Faith, every clause of which was separately and collectively binding upon the conscience of the signatory. With a large class of clergymen, the neglect of systematic theological study, till lately almost characteristic of their order, has tended in the same direction: they have lived and worked in their parishes, performing, as is the wont of the English parish priest, many secular and social duties with admirable efficiency, preaching ethical sermons, and not troubling themselves with schools of thought. The Arminian reaction against the severity of the Calvinistic scheme had a wide influence in England, though it came too late to

leave its mark on any of the formularies of the Church: if on the one hand there have been many excellent clergymen who have never dreamed of realizing the sacerdotal powers bestowed upon them at their ordination, there have been as many who would be puzzled to reconcile their views of human nature and their theory of salvation with the seventeenth Article. Always there has been a distinct Latitudinarian party in the Church, though all Latitudinarianism has not arisen from the same source or manifested itself in the same way: men like Hales of Eton, or Whichcote and Smith of Cambridge, or the beloved disciple whose loss is yet fresh, Dean Stanley, the natural bent of whose minds was towards a wide comprehension, and the reduction of the essentials of religion to the fewest, and the subordination of the dogmatic element in it to the ethical and the spiritual; or philosophizing theologians, like Cudworth and Henry More the Platonist, and, in a later time, Butler and Paley; or modern Broad-Churchmen, who claim that the Articles interpose no obstacle in the way of the freest investigation of the character and claims of Scripture, and who seek a reconciliation between ancient faith and modern science. But when we turn from the masters of schools to their disciples, we find that there is an essential difference between schools within

a church and sects without it. In the latter, diversities of faith always tend to become emphatic: their respective adherents stand to one another in a habitual attitude of opposition, and belief grows to be one-sided in proportion as it is firmly held. But schools of thought are to some extent the arbitrary creation of the critic; they melt into one another by imperceptible gradations: there are men who without conscious inconsistency claim to belong to all schools, and men who do not think themselves unfaithful to truth in adhering to none. And the Church of England has always held, especially in the ranks of its laity, a large number of excellent Christians who have at once kept aloof from parties, and have exercised a moderating influence upon them. They have been content with a form of worship which came down to them from their forefathers, and with which their own religious affections were inextricably intertwined. They have as much liberty as they desire, and as much order as they need. They see that the system of the Church has grown up with the institutions of the country, and think it well fitted to satisfy the wants of the people. If we are at all able to speak of the Church of England as a whole, it is largely because of the existence in it of men like these.

The presence in the Church of England of a

Catholic and a Protestant school, makes it difficult to define its position in regard to the authority of Scripture. If, on the one hand, there are theologians who adopt the dictum of Chillingworth, 'The Bible, and the Bible only, the religion of Protestants,' who, with the eighth Article, base the authority of the creeds on the fact that they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture, and with the twentieth subordinate the 'authority' of the Church 'in controversies of faith' to the final arbitrament of 'God's word written'—there are certainly others who look upon the Bible as rather the witness and guarantee of the teaching of the Church than as the original source of doctrine, and lay a very real stress on the decisions of the first four Councils. There can be no doubt that the Church of England has always been eager, beyond other Protestant churches, in the study of Patristic theology. She has consulted the mind of antiquity. She has set Cyprian beside Augustine, and Athanasius beside Jerome. The necessity of defending her episcopal constitution has sent her back to the ante-Nicene Fathers, and given her a personal interest in the problem of the Ignatian letters. In like manner, the scientific study and emendation of the New Testament text was early begun and has been zealously carried on in England. But the peculi-

arity of Anglican religion nowhere shows itself more characteristically than in its neglect of dogmatic theology. It has contributed almost nothing to the development of Protestant scholasticism. When I have mentioned 'Pearson on the Creed,' I have said all. The very fact that the chief dogmatic book of the Church of England is based upon the Apostles' Creed, and not upon a series of *Loci Communes* capable of indefinite subdivision and multiplication, is full of meaning. For such 'bodies of divinity' as our language possesses, we must go back to the days of triumphant Puritanism. The Church of England has abundantly defended her own theological position, has endeavoured to find a philosophical basis for religion, has contended more or less successfully with Deism, has produced many famous preachers and some few mystics; but she has nothing to set beside the mighty volumes of Gerhard or of Turretine. It is well for her that she has been content with the simplicity of her own formularies: had she made the deliberate attempt to enlarge and draw out the compromise of Elizabeth into a compact logical system, she would certainly have lost in comprehensiveness all that she might have gained in doctrinal coherence.

So founded and animated by such a spirit, the Church of England has always held, and still

holds, a middle and a mediating place in Christendom. Nor has the idea of a reunion of Christendom, to be effected on the lines of her own constitution, ever been long absent from the mind of the English Church. Archbishop Wake, at the beginning of the last century, with this view actually opened communications—unhappily fruitless—both with the Gallican party of the French Church, and with leading Protestant theologians in Germany and Switzerland. In our own time the Evangelical Alliance, the establishment of the Bishopric of Jerusalem in conjunction with Prussia, the Society for the Reunion of Christendom, the efforts at friendly intercourse with the Greek Church, the sympathy of churchmen of almost all parties with the old Catholics, are evidences of the same spirit. The difficulties in the way of any practical result are immense, probably insuperable; but the persistence of the desire is a strong testimony to the fact that the Church of England, taken as a whole, is both Protestant and Catholic—or neither.

I have regarded the English Reformation as having come to its close in the year 1662, when the Act of Uniformity at once settled the Church of England on a basis which has not since been disturbed, and necessitated the separate existence of Dissent. To enter upon the subsequent history of the Dissenting churches would therefore both

transcend the limits of my subject and introduce us to a fresh field of discussion, not only wide, but demanding very minute treatment. What can and must be said of Dissent in the general may be compressed into comparatively little space. The multiplication of sects is a phenomenon almost peculiar to English and American religion, and may, I think, be traced to the influence of free political institutions. Nations which have charge of their own business, and have conquered the right of unfettered discussion, cannot be compelled into a mechanical uniformity in religion. The same spirit which made the Lords and Commons of England pass the Act of Provisors under the Plantagenets, dictated the abandonment of their benefices by the Ejected Ministers of 1662, and has since kept in independent existence the numerous sects into which Nonconformity has developed. Some Dissenting churches represent a principle, theological, ecclesiastical, ritual; others are the result of attempts to feed a spiritually-neglected people; others again, it may be, are little more than the children of dissatisfaction and revolt. I am not here to state, much less to estimate, the grounds on which each bases its Nonconformity: all I have to note is, how large a part of the nation's religious life flows in these channels. The pure mysticism of the early Friends, the steady devotion

to liberty, civil and religious, of the English Presbyterians, the insistence upon personal piety of the Independents and the Baptists, the zeal for souls of every various sect of Methodist, the ethical view of religion so strongly urged by modern Unitarians, are all elements which have helped to give compass and richness to the religious life of England. Both the quality of piety has been enhanced and its quantity increased by the existence of Nonconformity. At the same time, it is the necessary tendency of a sect to exaggerate the importance of its own constituent principle and, to the neglect of others which may be of equal weight, to push it to an extreme; at once to overvalue orthodoxy, and to give orthodoxy a narrow interpretation. And the reaction of Dissent upon the Church has been far from wholly favourable. The consciousness of rivalry has lessened its comprehensiveness and chilled its generosity. Churchmen have lavishly sent out beyond seas the sympathy which they have denied to fellow-christians at home. The fear of being thought to yield to Nonconformist pressure has stiffened the immobility of doctrine and practice natural to an ancient church. Had a policy of comprehension been frankly adopted in 1662, or when the opportunity came again in 1689, I am convinced that the tone of English theology to-day would have been far more

accordant than it is with the best knowledge and the characteristic spirit of the age. *Sed Dîs aliter visum :* and we can only look to the new Reformation to restore the unity which was shattered by the old.

VI

THE GROWTH OF THE CRITICAL SPIRIT

THE theology of the Reformation rests upon the assumption that the Bible is a whole, consistent in all its parts, dogmatically authoritative, and containing, either explicitly or implicitly, a minutely elaborate system of revealed truth. I have now to show the effect produced upon this assumption, and the doctrinal results which rest upon it, by the growth of the critical spirit in Europe during the last three hundred years. This effect is of two kinds. First, the Bible itself has been subjected to a process of literary and historical criticism which has made it henceforth impossible to use it as the Reformers did, and to draw from it the same kind of doctrinal inference. And next, the conjoint influence of philosophical speculation and the successful study of nature, has been to establish new canons of credibility and to undermine the authority of the record, even in cases where its witness cannot

be disputed. The method, in one instance, is literary; in the other, philosophical: one puts the documents in a new light, the other criticizes their contents. Possibly this division of the subject may be more logical than real; nor can I pretend that my treatment will answer to it with minute accuracy. What we have to deal with is the changed spirit of the age, which tries truth by new tests, and finds incredible what men once never thought of questioning. Secular movements of the human mind are brought about only by many independent yet related forces subtly acting and interacting.

The present chapter deals with the growth of literary and historical criticism in Europe, and of the change which it has wrought in our conception of the Bible.

The Humanists and the Reformers soon began to part company. For some students of classical antiquity, the purely religious interests which prevailed at Wittenberg had little attraction: other and graver scholars not only had no sympathy with Luther's characteristic doctrine, but thought the atmosphere of the elder church more favourable to the intellectual freedom which was the breath of their life. We have seen the choice which Erasmus deliberately made. Reuchlin, who had given Melanchthon to Wittenberg, withdrew his friendship from him when

he saw his devotion to the cause of Reform. On the other hand, it was not unnatural that the men who, as they believed, had rediscovered the gospel and restored the Bible to the Church, should not rate very highly the study of the classics in and for themselves. To them, the cultivation of Greek and Latin letters had had its complete work in making possible a correct interpretation of Scripture. Luther, in rebelling against the schoolmen, had also rebelled against their great master, Aristotle: to him, the gospel was the one true philosophy, and all truth not contained in the Bible of only secondary importance. As years went on, he became more and more absorbed in theology: he even went so far as to say, that when once the Bible was in all men's hands, there would be an end of human writing of books: God's Word would be enough.

Still, when Erasmus says more than once, with quite sufficient bitterness, that 'wherever Lutheranism reigns, there good letters perish,' it is to be noticed that he excepts Luther and Melanchthon from the general censure. Luther was all his life a zealous promoter of education. He held that the establishment of schools was the duty of every city and village, and desired to divert in that direction part of the revenues of the Church. He was so far in advance of his age as to advocate the foundation of girls' schools.

The whole of his active life was spent as a teacher in a university, of which he was the animating and guiding spirit. At the same time, he looked upon classical learning as subordinate to theology, and as valuable only for theological purposes. But I do not think it is possible to quote from his works or letters passages which tend to the serious disparagement of classical culture. And Melanchthon was distinctly a humanist. He came to Wittenberg to teach Greek, and would willingly but for the prevailing influence of Luther, have gone on teaching Greek all his life. By his persevering labour in annotating classics and compiling school-books, he earned the title of *Præceptor Germaniæ*. But even the influence of Melanchthon could not prevent the new religious teaching from throwing the old learning into the shade. That it did so, we need not go to the complaints of the humanists themselves to prove: the evidence lies plentifully scattered through Melanchthon's own letters. In 1522, he speaks of the signal folly of those 'who at the present day think that piety consists only in the contempt of all good letters, of all ancient erudition.' He implores Spalatin to have an especial care of the literary studies of the University, complaining that the students are rather overwhelmed than instructed by the mass of theological lectures. He bewails to Eoban Hess the decline of literature,

adding, 'Those, believe me, who profess their dislike of profane letters have no better opinion of theology, for this is only the excuse which they put forward for their laziness.' He writes to Baumgärtner, a senator of Nürnberg, that unless he and men like him defend and foster letters, a Scythian barbarism or something worse must settle upon Germany. In face of this evidence and much more of the same kind, we can easily believe Erasmus when he says that it was easier to find professors than students to attend their lectures; that the booksellers declared that before Lutheranism came up they could sell three thousand volumes in less time than six hundred afterwards; that at Strasburg and elsewhere there were those who thought that the only thing a theologian needed to learn was Hebrew. No doubt the old humanist grew bitter in his last days, as he watched the triumphant progress of the movement from which he had deliberately turned aside. But it is plain that, in spite of Melanchthon, there was a tendency to go back to the spirit of a time at which it was considered a perilous thing for a Christian to read heathen books.

But the tide of reviving interest in classical culture, which had been slowly gathering strength for a century and a half, was far too mighty to be even temporarily arrested by any defection

of the Reformers. While they were occupied in internecine quarrels and the building up of rival systems of dogmatic theology, the work of recovering the mind of antiquity went steadily on. It was a longer and a more laborious task than from our present standpoint of culture we are easily able to conceive; and the men who accomplished it are not to be measured by the worth of their visible contributions to literature. When the convent libraries of east and west had been ransacked, and every fragment of ancient literature consigned to the safe-keeping of the printing-press, the work was only begun. Texts had to be emended, grammars to be slowly compiled, the materials of dictionaries collected with almost infinite toil The whole mass of learned tradition, on the basis of which a scholar now begins his work, had to be painfully brought together. When, by the labours of several generations, the philological part of the task was accomplished with tolerable completeness—when all educated men could read the classical authors in the original, and Greek and Latin were written by scholars with facility and even elegance—there remained the work of reproducing the life of the ancients; of understanding their law, their worship, their military systems, their amusements; of rewriting their history, and reducing their chronology to order. And this was a toil which lasted through

the eighteenth century, if indeed it can be said to be even yet at an end. Italy soon gave up her place in the van of classical culture. Her scholarship became mere phrase-mongering and Ciceronianism. Not what a man had to say, but how he said it, was the all-important thing; while platitude was no offence at all, solecism was a mortal sin. I have already spoken of the lack of moral fibre in the Italian scholars of the age of the despots: when Rome became serious under the influence of the Counter-Reformation, humanists were warned off debatable ground, and bidden to employ their pens in her service, if at all. The study of Greek fell into disfavour; and when Jesuit influence came to predominate in schools and colleges, those admirable educators had practical ends of their own, which they cared for more than the progress of philology. So the literary hegemony passed to France and to Holland. Budæus, Turnebus, Casaubon, Salmasius, are the glories of French scholarship. If the Scaligers boasted an Italian descent, the elder lived and wrote in France; the younger and greater, who was Huguenot to the heart, taught in Leyden. It would be difficult to enumerate the many profound scholars who toiled in the Universities of Holland to complete the long task the nature of which I have endeavoured to indicate. Their labours lie concealed in the grammars and

dictionaries which to-day smooth the path of classical culture to our children; in the annotations which elucidate every difficult passage and explain every obscure allusion; in that knowledge of ancient life which is part of the intellectual air we breathe. The result was at once to restore that living connexion with the mind of antiquity which Christian Europe deliberately abandoned in the sixth century, and to accumulate the materials upon which the higher and more constructive criticism of a later age has worked.

To narrate, even in the briefest summary, the history of that higher criticism, would be manifestly impossible in this place. But I may be allowed to say a word of each of three epoch-making books, which will sufficiently indicate the direction which the current of educated European thought was taking from the end of the seventeenth to the beginning of the nineteenth century. The first of these is Richard Bentley's immortal 'Dissertation on the Epistles of Phalaris,' which was published in 1699. Sir William Temple, ignorantly meddling in the foolish controversy as to the respective literary merits of ancients and moderns, had asserted that the Epistles of Phalaris, a Sicilian tyrant of the sixth century B.C., were not only the earliest in date, but the best ever written. An edition of the letters published upon this by the Hon. Charles Boyle, drew from

Bentley, then young and comparatively unknown, a decisive opinion that they were a worthless forgery. All Christchurch, of which college Boyle was a member, rose in arms to defend him; and Bentley, in the opinion of contemporary critics, was completely crushed by the answer which, though published in Boyle's name, was really the production of a confederacy of scholars, of whom Atterbury was the chief. And it is to be noticed, as a gauge of the general state of learning in England, that even when Bentley in his 'Dissertation' had overwhelmed his opponents in such a flood of impetuous learning as no other European scholar could have poured forth, public opinion was still on the side of Boyle. But the moral of the controversy—one that sank slowly but effectually into the minds of the learned—was, that the authorship of ancient books cannot be decided by the traditional titles which they bear, but must be determined, at least negatively, by a careful examination of their contents. The second book I have to mention is Friedrich August Wolf's 'Prolegomena to Homer,' published in 1795. In it was put forward the hypothesis that the Iliad and the Odyssey were not, as was supposed, the work of one supreme poet, but each a cycle of heroic ballads, handed down by oral tradition from an age when writing was not yet known, and reduced to external unity by an

anonymous editor. Nothing could be more shocking to literary orthodoxy than this theory, yet it gradually made its way, and is now, in one form or other, generally adopted. Its result has been the acceptance, on wider than Homeric ground, of the principle, that an ancient book, which comes down to modern times as a whole under the name of a single author, may possibly be composed of many different documents of various age and origin, and that it is for criticism to decide, upon internal evidence, whether its unity is real or only apparent. The third book is Niebuhr's 'History of Rome,' the first volume of which was given to the world in 1811. Let the great critical historian speak in his own words. In the Preface to that memorable work, he says:

> The history of Rome was treated, during the first two centuries after the Revival of Letters, with the same prostration of the understanding and judgment to the written letter, and with the same fearfulness of going beyond it, which prevailed in all the other branches of knowledge. If anyone had pretended to inquire into the credibility of the ancient writers and the value of their testimony, an outcry would have been raised against such atrocious presumption. The object aimed at was, in spite of everything like internal evidence, to combine what they related. At the utmost, one authority was made, in some one particular instance, to give way to another, and this was done as mildly as possible, and without leading to any further results.

But at the touch of the Ithuriel spear of Niebuhr's criticism, the basis of that stately edifice of Roman history which Livy had erected crumbled into dust, and Regal Rome, from being a tract of human story peopled by living men whose motives we could analyse and whose actions we could narrate, became a shadowy realm of legend in which only the imagination of the historian could reconstruct the beginnings of law and order. Thenceforth all primeval history was looked at with fresh eyes. Its only sure facts were discerned to be such as could be vouched for by the testimony of contemporaneous structures and surviving institutions. It was seen what large contributions had been made to its written record by national self-consciousness and family pride, expressing themselves in legend and poetry. The earliest historians of the beginnings of humanity were henceforth regarded as being, for all practical purposes, as distant from the events which they pretend to narrate as we ourselves are, and much less able to distinguish the false from the true.

From what I have already said, it will be plain that it is not possible in this connexion to speak of literary and historical criticism as things apart. To determine the genuineness and trustworthiness of documents, is often to impugn or establish the credibility of the facts which

they record. And literary and historical criticism blend into one when the task to be accomplished is the decipherment of inscriptions, and the pushing forward of knowledge into a region beyond the range of formal historical record. The first great step in this direction was made when, at the end of the last century, the discovery of the Rosetta stone gave Young and Champollion a clue to the mystery of Egyptian hieroglyphics. The result of their researches, followed up by long subs quent toil in the same field by other labourers, has been no less than the unveiling to modern eyes of a national life, stretching back to an antiquity which would once have been considered incredible, and yet known to us in its minutest details. The decipherment of the monuments has been followed by the reading of many papyri, wonderfully preserved in the dry air of Egypt; and if the result has been to show that Herodotus was more accurate and Manetho less boastful than was once believed, the history of the Nile valley has been enriched by many particulars unrecorded by either. In a word, Egypt is no longer the mere vague synonym for the mysterious and the profound, which it was not only in ancient but in medieval times, the *terra incognita* where every wild theory could find an anchorage, but has taken its definite place in the history of civilization and the develop-

ment of religious thought. A similar result has attended the decipherment of the cuneiform inscriptions, begun by Grotefend, and Burnouf, and Lassen, and continued by a host of successful followers. The primeval history of the great empires which pressed upon Palestine from the north and east, as did Egypt from the south-west, has been unrolled before our eyes. In turn, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, have become known to us in the same way, and almost as minutely as Egypt. Monument answers to monument; clay tablet to papyrus. But this second great triumph of decipherment added more unexpected elements to our knowledge of antiquity than the first. Behind the Assyrian, now known to be a Semite, stands the Accadian, a Turanian, who spoke an agglutinative language, but who had a distinctive civilization, and who handed down to the tribes which supplanted him arts and sciences which descend from a world as yet unknown. And it is one of the most startling as well as the most recent results of archæological and philological research, that, as the faded characters of a palimpsest reappear under the cautious manipulation of the chemist, an empire which the world had all but forgotten has once more emerged into view. The Old Testament presents to us the Hittites as a Canaanitish people, often coupled with the Amorites, and

maintaining a habitual attitude of hostility to Israel—but that is all. Now they are revealed as forming a powerful state, between the Euphrates and the Orontes, having their capital at Carchemish, and with a widespread influence in Asia Minor, which has left traces in the history of art and religious ideas. From the apologetic point of view these discoveries are important, as they tend to confirm or to correct the Biblical narrative. But to the philosophical historian they have a much higher value. They restore Israel to his true place and proportion in the ancient world. We see now, for the first time, the forces of civilization which were at work about the Hebrews while they were still a half-migratory tribe of Canaan, as well as the tremendous political pressure which in later years made the kingdom of David the sport of rival empires.

Contemporaneous with this gradual decipherment of ancient records, aiding and aided by it, has been the growth of the new science of comparative philology. It had its birth in the recognition of the true place of Sanskrit among the languages of the world. The existence of Sanskrit, which as the literary dialect of India can never be said to have been a dead language, had been long known to missionaries, and to some extent to philologists; but it was not till

the last years of the eighteenth century that the labours of Sir William Jones and his colleagues of the Royal Asiatic Society began to display it in its true relations, nor till 1808 that Friedrich Schlegel, who possessed the vivid imagination which at certain turning-points of thought is the critic's best endowment, decisively pointed out its importance for the classification of language. I will not tell the familiar tale again, nor how the labours, first of Anquetil du Perron and then of Rask and Burnouf, restored the Zend to the catalogue of known tongues, and made Zerdusht once more a living prophet. But the result of thus establishing comparative philology on a basis the safety of which has been demonstrated by constantly fresh discovery, was, in virtue of the ethnological deductions surely drawn from it, first to extend our knowledge of primeval history far beyond the period of even the rudest monumental record, and next, to reduce to order a whole realm of facts which had hitherto received only conjectural interpretation. The separation of the Aryan peoples means also the segregation of the Semites, and the placing of Hebrew philology for the first time on a scientific foundation. I need hardly point out that in view of the sure outlook which we now have into that far distant past when the common ancestors of all Aryan peoples dwelt under the shadow of the

Himalayas, already speaking a language which cannot be connected with any Semitic dialect—in face of the fact that a large part of the population of the world expresses its thought in agglutinative tongues, which almost seem to be framed upon a different theory of speech from our own—it is impossible any longer to dream dreams of Hebrew as the language of Paradise, and to trace back the disruption of human speech to the arrogance of the Tower of Babel. Indeed, it is much more than a question of invalidating the historical truth of this or that Old Testament story: we look back over an infinitely wider prospect, and the map of primeval humanity is other than it was. But the procedure of comparative philology has made another and perhaps a more important contribution to the higher criticism than is involved in anything I have yet said. One of its achievements has been to reveal the secret of the Greek mythology. These gods and heroes, these divine beings haunting the secret recesses of mountain and wood, these strange stories, so full of naive beauty, so empty of ethical meaning, about which the classical imagination disported itself, whose spell a seriously moral Christianity has often striven to shake off, are an open riddle now. Tracked to their course in Vedic religion, they stand confessed as nature myths, and their frank

immorality is no more than the result of the expression of cosmic facts in terms of humanity. And it is thus to comparative philology that criticism owes the formation and clear definition of the idea of myth. Now at last the conception stands distinctly out by the side of that of legend, and can never again be confounded with it. No doubt, like all new intellectual instruments, the mythical theory has been too largely used, and has suffered from over-lavish application. But it answers to a real tendency of the human mind, especially in its earlier stages of development, and must henceforth take its place as a recognized factor of primeval history.

One general result of this long series of investigations has been the gradual growth of an art which, as distinguished from the mere formation and emendation of texts, has been called the higher criticism. It deals with the age and authorship of books : it decides whether a writing is an organic whole, or made up of fragments more or less cleverly combined : it attempts to go behind the letter, and to determine the writer's secret bent or conscious purpose. As applied to history, it sifts testimony before accepting it : it collects the witness of chance admissions, unconscious discrepancies : it questions rites, institutions, even language itself, in the hope of discovering the secrets which lie beneath the

surface: it traces legend to its origin in long-descended custom or genealogical pride, and compels myth to yield up the thought which has bodied itself in story. When it inspects the history of religious thought, it judges in accordance with the principle of continuity: it distinguishes between an earlier and a later in the intellectual order: and it first accomplishes its purpose when it succeeds in tracing a sure line of development. Indeed, its method may almost be summed up in one word as the historical: it rejects all a priori views and reasonings: its endeavour is to take facts as they are, to understand their origin, and to trace their mutual relation and interdependence. I have called this higher criticism an art rather than a science, not only because its principles and rules do not readily lend themselves to precise statement, but because the success of its processes largely depends upon the skill and tact of the critic. Possibly its negative are more definite than its positive achievements. It is less difficult to say by whom an ancient book cannot have been written than to name its actual author. To prove that Paul is not the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews is an easy thing; not so to decide between the conflicting claims of Apollos and Barnabas, and one knows not how many more. Criticism may pronounce a book to be made up

of many fragments, of various date and origin and yet fail to pick each separate stone out of the mosaic, and to say authoritatively where it came from. In the criticism of the Pentateuch, Elohist and Jehovist and Deuteronomist stand for facts, and not for fancies, though Ewald divide the text among them in one way, and Kuenen in another. It is the fashion in some quarters to deride the higher criticism as the mere product of individual caprice, to exaggerate the discrepancies of its results, and to imagine that they can be got rid of, like positive and negative quantities in an equation, by setting one against the other. But it is a mistake to suppose that this process, however far it may be carried, necessarily makes for the traditional view of things, which stands or falls by itself, and must meet its own difficulties. And criticism is making its sure way, from destruction to construction, from negative to positive results. Difficulties which the sharp sight of the eighteenth century detected, but which it could only solve by more or less ingenious guesswork, are rapidly receiving answers which, once fully understood, are felt to be final. Criticism now knows what legend is when it sees it. It can distinguish myth from either tradition or history. It can decide with adequate certainty delicate questions of authorship and genuineness and date. And the fresh triumphs which it is everyday

winning in the most obscure regions of primeval history make its claim to be heard on Biblical ground also, impossible to resist.

I have thus traced the growth of the critical spirit, in order that it may be quite clear that we are dealing with a general development of human thought, and not merely with a flux and reflux of the theological tide. There cannot well be a greater contrast than between the progress of truth within and beyond the reach of what are conceived to be religious interests. No sober scholar now questions the results of criticism as applied to Greek literature or Roman history; while, on the other hand, the battle still fiercely rages round positions which were held by the Reformers, yet which for a century past have been attacked by overwhelming and ever-accumulating forces. A finality is claimed for old views of the Bible, which in the case of any other literature would be laughed out of court; and the strangest devices, perpetually set up and perpetually abandoned, are used to blunt the edge of criticism and put the Scriptures in a place apart. And it is therefore expedient to show that these debates as to the literary constitution of the Bible do not belong to the class of theological logomachies which each generation is at liberty to renew with the old weapons and upon the old ground, but are an incident of the universal

march of the human mind, which occupies new territory everyday, and never abandons what it has once occupied. At first, and for some time, Biblical criticism was cultivated more by Catholic than by Protestant divines. It was the interest of the former to undermine the authority of Scripture for the benefit of the Church, while the latter was far too well satisfied with the foundation on which they built to pry too narrowly into its security.

The first impulse came from the outside, from Catholic divines, from Arminian heretics, from unbelieving philosophers. Hobbes remarked that the name 'the five Books of Moses,' was no proof that Moses was their author, and went on to adduce some of the most obvious reasons why he could not have written a large part of them. Spinoza interweaves with his *Tractatus Theologico-politicus* a whole body of acute negative criticism, not only showing by internal evidence that Moses could not have written the Pentateuch in its present shape, but throughout the whole Bible detecting literary facts at variance with traditional statements of authorship. Richard Simon, a priest of the Oratory, in his 'Critical History of the Old Testament,' published in 1678, again gave reasons against the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, a decision in which the Arminian Le Clerc, on some other grounds, opposed

to Simon, heartily concurred. But it was Astruc, a Catholic physician of Paris, who, in a work published in 1753, struck the key-note of subsequent debate. He believed that Moses wrote the Pentateuch but he thought he could distinguish and disengage the materials that he had used. There was a document, he said, in which God was always called Elohim, another in which he was always called Jehovah, and these were manifestly by different authors. The theory, in the shape in which Astruc propounded it, was crude, and so far untenable ; but it was eagerly caught up and modified by Semler, Eichhorn, Michaelis, and by the beginning of the present century had become a commonplace of criticism. Meanwhile, the study of the New Testament had been running a parallel course. The literary problem presented by the likenesses and differences of the Synoptical Gospels was the first to attract attention. The great Arminian, Hugo Grotius, in his 'Annotations on the New Testament,' laid it down that Mark's Gospel was an abridgment of Matthew's, and that Luke had used the other two. Simon, whose labours were not confined to the Old Testament, came to the conclusion that the first Gospel, as we have it, could not be the original work of Matthew, and revived the recollection of the *Antilegomena* of the ancient Church—the Apocalypse, the letter to the Hebrews, some of the

Catholic Epistles. Le Clerc thought that the Synoptists had all used the same documentary materials. Semler postponed the formation of the Canon to the end of the second century, and, in anticipation of the later Tübingen school, referred it to the influence of that Catholicism in which Jewish and Pauline Christianity found their reconciliation. But the very title of a treatise by Lessing, which was published in 1784, three years after his death, shows how far men had then wandered from the thought of the Reformation: 'A New Hypothesis as to the Evangelists, considered as merely Human Writers of History.' Nothing could more plainly indicate the breach made by literary criticism in the conception of the New Testament as an infallible record and authoritative compendium of doctrine.

I must pause here for a moment to notice a peculiar and very powerful influence exercised upon Biblical criticism by two great men whose active lives fall in the second half of the eighteenth century, Lessing and Herder. It would be easy to draw out points of contrast between them: in literary preference, Lessing belonged to the classical, Herder to the romantic school: the former would have as little have written the 'Spirit of Hebrew Poetry' as the latter the 'Laokoon.' Lessing exulted in the freedom of a man of letters, the fewness of whose wants left him at

liberty to criticize all systems and to pay an undivided allegiance to truth : Herder fretted all his life long under the restraints of his clerical profession, and leaves behind him the vague impression of an unfinished life, and profound truths not rounded off into system. But both were humanists, in the widest sense of the word, before they were theologians. Lessing's characteristic idea is the divine education of the human race ; Herder's greatest book, his 'Contributions to a Philosophy of Human History.' Both concurred in taking theology off the narrow Biblical ground to which the post-Reformation divines had confined it, and making it an affair of universal history and the natural capacities of man. What pregnancy was there in Lessing's conception of the Old Testament as the religious school-book adapted to the childhood of humanity ! Nor, when he hinted that it was possible to regard the New Testament in a similar light, and darkly prophesied an eternal Gospel yet to be revealed, was he far from that thought of a universal faith which has been suggested to later times by comparative theology. He restored tradition to its true place in Christian history by the remark, that at the very time when primitive faith was brightest and purest, the New Testament did not yet exist : he threw down the wall which had hitherto separated the Jewish and Christian dis-

pensation from the religious history of the world, by pointing out the root of all true religion in the heart of man. Perhaps Herder's characteristic efficacy of a similar kind lay in his intense appreciation of the human element in the Bible: not so much that he looked at it with an æsthetic eye, acknowledging its sublimity and praising its pathos, as that he heard in it the heart's cry of humanity towards God, and saw how it exhibited religion, as closely interwoven with every other faculty and capacity of man. After these men had written, it was hard for Biblical criticism to go back to the dry dissection of texts, the discussion of merely literary controversies. Theology, without ceasing to be divine, had become fully human. The Bible is only one chapter, though the most important, in the religious history of the race. As much as God's speech to man, it is man's answer to God. If it breathes now the accent of Divine command, it thrills and trembles as often with the aspirations and despairs of humanity.

The inquiries and speculations indicated in what I have already said have been pursued with untiring energy during the eighty years of the present century. As critic has succeeded critic—as Kuenen has seemed to correct and supersede Ewald, and may probably be corrected and superseded in his turn—as the mythical theory of Strauss and the tendenz-theory of Baur

have been proposed and rejected as the key which would unlock all mysteries—as no account of the mutual relations of the Synoptical Gospels can be said to be generally accepted—as the age and authorship of the Fourth are still matters of warm debate—it might appear at first sight as if nothing had been accomplished, and the sole result of criticism had been to throw our notions of the Bible into hopeless confusion. Even if it were so, its negative efficacy would be complete and undeniable. Where positive conclusions cannot be reached, it is better to rest in clear denials than in delusive affirmations. We are at all events nearer the truth when we look at the Pentateuch as made up of many fragments, put together we know not when or by whom, than when we confidently place it as the work of Moses at the beginning of Hebrew history. Which is the truer and therefore the more fruitful conception, the Book of Psalms as wholly or in large part the production of David, or as a collection of sacred lyrics, in which the whole spiritual life of Israel, in all his troubles and anguishes and varying moods of faith, is mirrored and expressed? So, in regard to the Gospels, even if we were unable to replace our negative by positive conclusions about them, we should still have got rid of the idea, so little accordant with fact, of the four independent witnesses, whose testimony it is neces-

sary, in the interests of evangelical truth, to harmonize by every fair and unfair device of interpretation. The critics, whose principle it is to trace a line of continuity in human thought, to detect a natural line of development in human affairs, know very well that the traditional view of the Scriptures is precisely that which is most fruitful in difficulties. No new theory of Hebrew history can be so puzzling as that which places the Levitical legislation at the beginning of long ages, the records of which show almost no trace of its existence and observance. What can be more difficult to suppose than that the teaching of Christ waited for the interpretation that was to make it plain till Paul came—Paul, who had never known him in the flesh, and who carefully abstained from intercourse with those who had?

But nothing is less true than the allegation that no results have been attained which can justly be called positive. In the first place, Biblical history has been brought into due relation with the general development of humanity. We are no longer invited to contemplate the beginnings of the race in the Garden of Eden six thousand years ago, or to connect the peopling of the globe with the dispersion of the family of Noah. Long before the date fixed by the old cosmogony for the creation of the world, we discern the existence of ancient empires, settled civiliza-

tions, substantial progress in the arts of life. We can trace the connexion of the nomad tribe, which, though numerically so insignificant, was reserved for so great a destiny, with neighbours more powerful and more civilized than itself, who were also its kinsmen by blood. Its story is no longer the story of mankind : its cosmogony, however poetically sublime, is only one of many similar guesses into the origin of things : the myths and legends into which its history runs up, have their near analogues in those read off from Babylonian bricks. Its genealogies require to be translated into tribal history, and even so tell us no more than the vague traditions of national relationship preserved among a people whose outlook upon the world was narrow. There is a strange contrast, which every year's investigation makes stranger, between Israel's conception of his own material grandeur and his real place in the world : he thinks, in common with all ancient peoples, that he stands next to the beginning of things and can command its secret : he is in reality but an insignificant tribe, prisoned in a corner of Asia, pressed upon by tribes as insignificant as himself, once, and only once, emerging into a position of second-rate political importance, and counting for nothing in the shock of Mesopotamian and Egyptian empires. Yet in another way all this only brings into a

more vivid light the grandeur of Israel's vocation, the strangeness of his fate. While ancient India, Assyria, Persia, Egypt, are almost forgotten, except by the scholars who painfully decipher the records of their life, Israel lives in human memory side by side with Greece and with Rome. He was powerless to resist the conquerors of the world ; but he has avenged conquest by imposing upon them his religious ideas. He shares with Greece the distinction of being the teacher of mankind.

In like manner, criticism has re-read the Hebrew history, making the thread which binds it together not one of conscious prophecy looking forward to its fulfilment, but a natural intellectual and religious development, which in the far reach of its scope and the order of its sequence is divine without being miraculous. To attain this result, it was necessary to abandon all traditional accounts of the authorship of books, and to seek the secret in the unconscious revelations of the documents themselves. But in comparison with the historical inferences which this method yields, literary questions shrink into insignificance. That the Pentateuch is a composite book, which assumed its present shape when the independent political history of Israel was at an end—that the Book of Chronicles was written in the interests of the priestly caste—that the apparent unity of Isaiah's

prophecy hides at least a dual authorship—that the books ascribed to Solomon are of different origin and much later date—that the prophecy of Daniel must be postponed to an era which is late enough to change prediction into history—are all important results of research in regard to which most competent critics agree. But the question of questions in the criticism of the Old Testament is this: Are we to place the Law at the beginning of national history, or at the end, when a restored but broken Israel begins a new life in a corner of the Persian empire? Was Israel sternly monotheistic from the day of his escape from Egypt, or did Jehovah slowly grow from a tribal God, worshipped under strange names and with half-idolatrous rites, into 'the righteous Lord who loveth righteousness,' before whom 'all the Gods of the nations are idols'? Was prophecy a revolt against a priesthood already corrupt and a law fallen into disuse, or itself the first dawn of a pure faith and a noble religious life? Can we, except in fragments of legislation still preserved in the Pentateuch, trace the Law further back than its sudden production from the temple archives in the days of Josiah? And must we not descend to the time of Ezra for the epoch when, the voice of prophecy being silent, and almost its very remembrance faded out of the people's hearts, the legal conception of religion laid a stiffening grasp upon

Israel which it never again relaxed? It is manifestly not for me to indicate, even in the briefest way, the evidence for this complete reversal of what once passed for Hebrew history, it is enough to say, that while every step in the reasoning can be sufficiently justified, the result of the whole is for the first time to present a reading of the record which conforms to a natural process of development. Now we see how Israel grew into what he was. We understand his perils, his temptations, his backslidings He re-enters the field of ordinary history, and from a puppet of the Divine purposes becomes human once more.

Criticism has had a much less difficult, a much less destructive work to dŏ on the New Testament; but the result has been the same—the conversion of a divine oracle into a human record. We do not now assume the New Testament as the beginning of the history of Christianity: we watch it gradually become what it is, in a Church which was itself growing and gathering strength through a period of at least a century and a half. There is a time when only the Apocalypse and some Epistles of Paul's are in Christian hands: then come 'Memoirs of the Apostles,' which disengage themselves into separate Gospels, extant and lost: there is a fourth Gospel, which bears plain traces of a later date, and Hellenic, perhaps Alexandrian influences: the defining line of the Canon shifts, including and

excluding doubtful books, until at last from the long and changeful process emerges the New Testament that we have, yet at a time when the Church is already far on her way towards recognition by the empire. When the literary history of the New Testament is thus set forth in all its details, when the different influences under which its separate books were written are drawn out, when it is plain that it was at one time possible that the Shepherd of Hermas might have found a place in the Canon and the Apocalypse have been shut out, how can it be any longer regarded as 'one entire and perfect chrysolite' reflecting the unchangeable and infallible mind of God? We have to recognize the fundamental distinction between the words of Christ himself and the varying interpretation put upon them by apostles. We must separate the Palestinian tradition of his teaching preserved in the Synoptics from that which had passed through the strongly refracting medium of the powerful mind to which we owe the Fourth Gospel. We may learn from Strauss that the causes which produce myth and legend had not been wholly inoperative in shaping the evangelical history. We must set Paul and his gospel apart, as an efficient factor of the earliest Christianity. We must note the existence of other forms of apostolical interpretation of Christ, which were neither Paul's nor capable of reconciliation with

his. We may see in the Apocalypse an outbreak of fiery Hebrew zeal, goaded to vision by the cruelties of Nero, and find in the Pastoral Epistles the traces of a Church slowly organizing itself years after Paul has vanished in the darkness. We may discern, if we will, with Baur, the conflict between Paul and the Twelve, between Judaism and Universalism, in the Apostolic Church, until at last both were reconciled in a Catholicism into the shadow of which the influence of the Apostle to the Gentiles paled, till it was revived by Augustine. But if all these things are so, what becomes of the one, minute, dogmatic faith which all the books of the New Testament are alleged to teach with accordant voice? Must we not substitute for this theory the conception of a Teacher, greater than any or all of his disciples, whose words have come down to us in records which rest upon a still earlier tradition, and whom apostles have interpreted, each as he could, each in accordance with the limitations of his own lesser soul? This New Testament, in which every word, no matter by whom written or when, is of equal inspiration and equal authority—still more, this New Testament of Luther's, in which Paul interprets Christ, and the true gospel is not the word of the Master but the comment of the servant—may be a literary miracle, but it is hardly the New Testament whose component parts we can distinguish, and whose history we can trace.

There are two elements of Hebrew history which have been relied upon to give it a quite peculiar character, as to each of which criticism has a word to say, miracle and prophecy. The first shows the special interposition of God in this particular line of human development; the second binds together all parts of the dispensation into an indissoluble whole. Of miracle, I shall have more to say in connexion with another part of my subject: the lesson which criticism teaches in regard to it is, that the allegation of marvels is not confined to the Jewish history; that they form part of the furniture, so to speak, of all religion in a particular stage of development; that, given a certain habit of thought, a certain urgency of spiritual crisis, miracle is as sure to make its appearance as hysterical excitement to accompany emotional fanaticism, Cybellic or Bacchic, Catholic or Evangelical. It is much more a form of popular belief than of conscious imposture: it is the people's way of acknowledging the presence of God, as the devout man of science recognizes him in inexorable law and unbroken order. So, again, the controversy as to prophecy has gradually changed its ground. It was once a question as to the fulfilment of prediction: the doubt now is, whether predictions were ever uttered. The prophet is no longer the mouthpiece of divine vaticination as to the future: when Israel, who, like every other ancient people,

believed in prediction, burned to know the mind of the Lord or to compel the secret of what should be, it was not to the prophet that he turned, but to the diviners, to the priests, to Urim and Thummim, to the lot. The prophet is the teacher of spiritual religion, the servant of Jehovah who calls back the people to their rightful allegiance, the rebuker of sin in high places and low. He is profoundly persuaded of the necessary connexion of national prosperity with national righteousness, and he does not hesitate to promise good things to a people that serve the Lord. He is the preacher of the ideal; and the ideal lies always in the future. The darker, the more hopeless, is Israel's present fate, the clearer is the prophet's conviction that a deliverer must come, who, by lifting the people to a higher plane of faith and obedience, will end their misery too. Mingled with this, especially in the later Isaiah, is an ardent prevision of the part which Israel is destined to play in the religious education of the world. But all this is so far from answering to the ordinary idea of prediction, consciously uttered, accurately fulfilled, capable of being used as an evidence of Divine interposition, as to belong to quite another order of thought.

The re-reading of Hebrew history which the higher criticism thus compels, enormously increases the literary and human interest of the Bible. It is true that the mechanical ties and braces of type

and antitype, prediction and fulfilment, covenant of law and covenant of grace, fall to pieces at its touch; but they are more than replaced by the living unity which it enables us to trace through every successive age of Biblical development. While the human element in Scripture and the history which it records is thus brought into more vivid relief, the divine remains, though possibly no longer clothed in the forms with which the uncritical mind of the Reformation was familiar. The more decisively Israel finds his place in ordinary history, the more singular that place is discerned to be. Whatever criticism may have to say as to the composition of the Gospels, it cannot touch the charm of the Christ, or weaken the force of his sweet reasonableness, or derogate from the victory of his faith. And it is only when the words and incidents of the Old Testament are released from the artificial necessity of proving this or answering to that—when, instead of being fitted into their places as parts of a theological system, they are allowed freedom of movement and the grace of self-manifestation—that we see the Hebrew literature as it is, and for the first time fully appreciate its marvellous religious depth and variety. These dim patriarchal times, whose story the piety of a later age tells with such an exquisite simplicity, so tender a grace: the first struggles of the people escaping from Egypt for a place in the world, and

some fixed law, some stable order: the slow advance of Israel to the conception, not only of a single Ruler, but of a moral government of the world: the deep conviction of the prophets that the salvation of the nation lay in allegiance to a righteous God, and the persuasions, the complaints, the rebukes, the warnings, the encouragements, which they addressed to a people stiff-necked and only half convinced: the growth of the legal and sacerdotal conception of religion, which at last substituted the Rabbi for the Prophet, and enabled the Scribe and Pharisee to sit in Moses' seat:—all prepare the way for the splendid outburst of the prophetic spirit which Israel was no longer able to comprehend, though it was welcomed by the world. But along the line of this development, once more discerned in its natural order, what free play of human emotion and passion, what interfusion of God's life with man's, what depth of reverent awe, what dizzy flights of aspiration, what stern faithfulness to duty, what restoring agonies of repentance! These things, disengaged now from the theological trammels which confined and disguised them, show themselves in their real force and beauty. This poor Semitic tribe, but one degree removed from the Bedouin of the desert, no longer regarded as the mechanical mouthpiece of Omnipotence, is revealed in its

native grandeur. We have religion, not now embodied in a dogmatic system, but interwoven with human life, unravelling its perplexities, inspiring its strength, sanctifying its sorrows—at once the law of its development and the goal of its endeavour.

The theology of the Reformation begins and ends with the Bible. It disowns tradition, and accepts the testimony of the Fathers only in so far as it accords with its own interpretation of Scripture. But I have, finally, to point out that the New Testament, as included within the hard and fast line of the Canon, cannot be placed as the fountain-head of Christian development and treated as the sole source of sound doctrine. We have seen that it grew up side by side with the Church of at least the first century and a half. It is true that the same forces to some extent moulded both; but, on the one hand, many things conspire to prove that the New Testament contains, not a complete record of the influences which were at work, but only such a selection from them as the literary and religious sense of the third century judged worthy of preservation; while, on the other hand, nothing can be plainer than that the literary activity of Paul gave him a larger place in the Canon than in the contemporary Church. There was, first, a Church without a New Testament; next, a Church with a New Testament in process of compilation,

and existing in different forms in different hands. What are we to say, then, of the relation to the New Testament of that Creed of Nicæa in which in the year 325 the Church for the first time formulated its faith? Can its doctrine be extracted from Scripture by fair process of literal interpretation? Can we say, as a matter of history, that Scripture was the sole source from which it was derived? Can its doctrine be shown to have been universally held throughout the second and third centuries, and to have been definitely drawn out in the fourth, only for the condemnation of Arian heresy? I may seem to be here treading upon delicate ground; but I should be untrue to myself and the theory which I am advocating, if I did not say that I regard it as a clear result of criticism that the history of Christian doctrine during the first ages is one of gradual development, affected by the impact of forces which were Greek as well as Jewish. I do not inquire whether that development involves an approach to or a retrogression from the truth: I only affirm that continuity is an active principle at all periods of the history of religious thought, and that it is contrary to the plainest evidence of fact to seek for finality even in the New Testament. There was more of Plato, more of Philo, in the Reformers' creed than they knew, though the germs which attained so luxuriant a growth in Patristic theology may have

passed in the first instance through a New Testament medium. Human thought is but a single great sea, though with many sheltered bays and landlocked inlets : it rises and falls with a universal tide, and none of its waters can be completely or long severed from the rest.

VII

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PHILOSOPHICAL METHOD AND SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION

THROUGHOUT the last Lecture I confined myself strictly to the ground of Biblical criticism. I showed how a more accurate appreciation of the character of ancient literature, joined to a gradually accumulating knowledge of antiquity, compelled us to look at the books of the Bible in a fresh light; to re-read their testimony, and to substitute another principle of unity for that which had been supposed to bind them together. But although the first object of literary criticism, regarded as a method of investigating truth, is to ascertain the original form and true character of books, and to collect their direct or incidental testimony to facts, a second and more radical process of judgment is often involved in this; and even when the record is plainest and most authentic, it may be necessary, while still remaining on purely literary ground, to form an estimate of its credi-

bility. Now, however, I have to speak of intellectual forces which have been at work since the Reformation, the characteristic of which is to approach the Bible and religion generally with a priori criteria of credibility, and to claim an absolute right of judging or moulding conceptions which are undoubtedly Biblical. The result of the higher criticism, as a whole, is to declare that the history, the structure, the religious constitution of the Bible, unfit it to stand in the relation to human faith in which the Reformers placed it. But the tendencies of thought which are now to occupy us take up an independent attitude of criticism to Biblical statements and ideas; and while they altogether reject some, demand that others shall be modified, as a condition of being recognized as certain constituents of knowledge. These may be classed under two heads, philosophical and scientific: the one being the result of modern ways of thinking, the other of a knowledge of nature which has become a permanent possession of the race. Here again, I must call attention to the fact that these forces mutually act and react, and that the distinction between them cannot always be observed.

One important result of the Reformation was the dissolution of that union between philosophy and theology which had been effected by the Schoolmen. Up to the sixteenth century, there had been, with

trifling exceptions—and those brand-marked as heretical—but one philosophy, as there was but one theology. I do not mean that the Schoolmen were speculatively agreed among themselves; that there were not Nominalists and Realists, Scotists and Thomists; but that opposition between philosophy and theology was a thing undreamed of. The Church might look upon one form of speculation as being more favourable to her claims than another, but all speculators declared themselves the supporters of orthodox doctrine and the Church's obedient servants. There were indeed subtle forms of philosophical as of theological heresy beneath the surface. Arabian thinkers, of whom Averrhoes may be taken as the representative, had drunk strange draughts at the same fountain-head of Greek thought as that at which the Schoolmen had quenched their thirst; but as a rule philosophy was orthodox, and orthodoxy willing to be thrown into philosophical form. But the great reawakening of European thought, of which the Reformation was one result, completely changed all this. Luther's rebellion was almost as much against the Schoolmen and Aristotle as against the Pope; and although his followers, as I have tried to show, fell easily under the yoke of a scholasticism which was identical in spirit, though not in form, with the old, the impulse given to independent speculation was strong and lasting.

From that time to this, theology and philosophy have pursued each its own way: rival powers, often conscious of secret hostility, often seeking reconciliation, but always, from the very fact of the separation, engaged in reciprocal criticism. Philosophy, laying claim to universal intellectual jurisdiction, has sometimes been willing to allow religion, upon certain fixed conditions, a subordinate and limited place: religion has anxiously gone about to find for herself a sure philosophical basis: while, again, each has flouted the other, each has claimed an undivided supremacy. The time of complete and permanent reconciliation may come yet; but there are few signs of its approach, and the joint history of philosophy and theology during the last three centuries is one of independent life and often sundered interests.

When we try to get behind these general statements, we are met by the difficulty that modern European philosophy can show no development in the direction of fixed and widely-accepted results of speculation. The continuity of thought is indeed not difficult to be traced: Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel—between any one of these great thinkers and the next in succession, the critic may discern not merely the logical but often the actual link. Can we say as much, now that a considerable part of educated Germany has made the transition to Schopenhauer

and to Hartmann? So in our own country we can establish a line of succession from Locke to Hume, from Hume to Spencer, with many deviations of more or less importance, by the road, but who can say in what direction the development tends, or to what obvious goal it makes its way? Much more it seems to an outside critic that the motion of philosophy is rather in an orbit round a centre than in a direct line towards a mark: old problems continually recur: not even the solutions of them are always new: the pendulum swings between opposite poles of thought: a sensational philosophy now obtains, and now an intuitional: a nation is idealist in one generation and sceptical in the next. But whether there be any advance on the part of philosophy towards absolute truth, or in what direction that advance is being made, are not questions which we have to answer now. What we are concerned with is the relation of philosophy to theology. And here I fail to trace such a parallel course between the philosophy and the Christianity of the post-Reformation centuries, as would indicate a progressive influence of one upon the other. Minds naturally inclined to religion have justified their adhesion to it on every kind of philosophical principle. And, on the other hand, men in whom the religious sense is only rudimentary, and who have rarely felt the touch of divine awe upon their souls, never find any

difficulty in persuading themselves that true philosophy leaves no place for faith.

If this were all, it would seem unnecessary to pursue this part of the subject farther. But that it is not so, will appear from the consideration that philosophy is not only an attempt to comprehend all knowledge in an intellectual unity, throughout which the same laws are valid and every subordinate part falls into its proper place, but also a method, an organon, which prescribes modes of investigation and declares laws of thought. And the work of philosophy, regarded in the latter light, has made a sensible approach to completion, which is recognized by all thoughtful men. Europe, since the time when Descartes first applied himself to the solution of the philosophical problem, has made enormous progress in the art of thinking.

Nor do I now chiefly allude to the publication of certain great books on method, or the investigations which have been made into the principles of logic; here, as elsewhere, practice has to a large extent preceded theory. The problem of walking has been solved by walking, not by anatomical and mechanical disquisition; and when the historian of human thought is disposed to put Bacon at the head of the development of modern science, he should remember that, of the men who have actually made the discoveries and thought out the laws, not one in a hundred has ever read a line of his

works. Philosophy and science, working now separately, now together, have painfully beaten out a method for themselves, which success has confirmed, which failure has helped to correct; and the result is, the formation of habits of thought, the laying down of canons of investigation, which are, if I may so speak, in the intellectual air, which are the common inheritance of inquirers, to which it is no signal merit to conform, but which it is absurd and disgraceful to neglect. To place a general reliance on the faculties of the human mind, to suffer, if possible, no unverified assumptions, to bring the most ancient and most widely-accepted principles to the test of facts, to lay a broad basis of observation for every induction, to test what seems to be fresh truth by crucial experiment, to expect uniformity in the action of natural forces, are all rules which cannot now be formulated without a sound of commonplace. But those who are best able to contrast the working of the modern with that of the medieval mind, will also know best how large a part of the fresh ground which humanity has won for itself since the Reformation, is covered by these homely maxims of common sense.

Philosophy has thus succeeded in bringing about, to a large extent, a unification of method in the pursuit of truth. Is theological truth to be considered as a thing *sui generis*, and to be distinguished from every other kind of intellectual possession

which the mind conceives itself entitled to call its own? Must it be regarded as given, not attained, and, when given, to be received without question and held exempt from criticism? Possibly the answer to these questions is, as I have already indicated, more properly to be sought on the ground of fact than of theory. Can any revelation be produced which does not require for its acceptance the active exercise of human faculties, and in its structure imperatively invite criticism? Still, as these matters have been persistently argued in a purely a priori fashion, two things may be noticed: first, that the highest claims of divine authority have been made and defended by an appeal to that very reason which it is their object to put out of court; and next, that the numerous attempts to frame systems of religious evidence are really a settlement of the matter in dispute in favour of philosophy. When Lardner compiles proofs of the credibility of the gospel history, when Samuel Clarke constructs a priori demonstrations of the Christian verities, when Butler attempts to show that the course and constitution of nature present difficulties of the same kind as the scheme of revelation, when Paley infers the existence of God from the marks of design in creation, when Theodore Parker hears the voice of God in the conscience and sees the Divine lineaments mirrored in the soul—they are all, consciously or

unconsciously, testifying to their belief that religious, must be sought by the same methods and tried by the same tests as other truth. The case of religious truth may indeed have elements peculiar to itself, as mathematics and morals, belonging to different departments of human thought, have each their own criteria, which differ in kind while they agree in principle. But no truth can be quite passively received. Even faith requires an antecedent mental process by which it feels itself justified.

Undoubtedly, therefore, the influence of philosophy has been steadily exerted in the direction of rationalism. I use this much decried word, in what is at once its etymological and its best sense, as meaning the application to religious data of such criteria as human faculties supply. There is indeed another and a bastard rationalism which has greatly prevailed, though not often in very close connexion with earnest philosophical thinking, which, taking as its test common sense, or the ordinary course of things, or the light of nature, has rejected as unworthy of belief all religious phenomena which seemed to cut athwart or to transcend them. It is unfortunately not possible to change an established nomenclature; else, it seems to me, we should gain in clearness of perception by calling this particular manifestation by the name of naturalism. We might then be

able to bring together in one category, as allied facts, the criticism of the English Deists, the crude and uncompromising disbelief of Voltaire and the Encyclopædists, and the attempt of Paulus to explain away the supernatural element in the Gospels. But philosophical rationalism, as I understand it, is a nobler and a wider principle than any of these. It admits whatever is involved in the pre-eminence of the Infinite Object of religious thought over the finite powers by which it is sought to be apprehended, and expects an element of mystery, a region of inconceivableness. On the other hand, it does not limit the cognitive powers of man to the reason, either logical or practical, or to any faculty which deals only with ideas that can be clearly apprehended and facts that can be wholly grasped; but allows a real value to the straining of the imaginative intellect after the Infinite and the Absolute; the aspiration of the soul towards the eternal, the indwelling, the all-energizing Life; the revelation in the conscience of an ideal holiness. In other words, against the overwhelming mass of Divine Being it sets the totality of human nature, and expects that, if there be a God, he is one who will approach man on every side and touch him at every point. This rationalism, therefore, is so far from being antithetical to revelation, as positively to look for it; in the sense, that is, not of a theological

system reduced to form and order, and enshrined in a book subject to time and chance, but of a constant intercourse between God and the Soul; gleams of insight, quickenings of conscience, inner tides of inspiration, all sweetening and strengthening graces, which interfuse the human with the Divine, and are in themselves the one sufficient proof of God. But at the same time it keeps the citadel of human individuality. A man can believe only that which has approved itself to him by some inward process, the efficacy of which he recognizes. Before he can even surrender his reason to authority, there must be some antecedent examination of its claims. And, on the other hand, to be thrilled by a sudden sense of the charm of Christ, and so to offer him the heart's allegiance, is as truly a rational process as to read every word of Paley's Evidences, and to surrender belief to the cogency of the reasoning.

There is one form in which the rational criterion is applied which deserves special mention. Men still dispute about the origin of moral ideas and analyse the secret of obligation, but they do not differ as to the ideas themselves. It is indeed a characteristic of the peculiar scepticism of the day, that almost in proportion as it loses hold of religious convictions, it clings to the supreme obligation of the moral law; while not only is there a general agreement as to the contents of morality

but such change as takes place in this respect is in the direction of admitted progress. As the race rises, so does its conception of duty; and with its conception of duty, its thought of God. Man cannot permanently worship that which is lower than his highest, inferior to his best. The character of the Deity reflects the moral status of the worshipper: cruel men believe in cruel divinities: to the licentious not even the courts of heaven are pure. And therefore, when, as constantly happens, old forms of belief survive into a better time and claim the authority of prescription, their accordance with the highest morality becomes a test which not only may, but must, be applied to them. No evidence of authority can stand for a moment against an awakened conscience. What a man once clearly sees to be cruel, or revengeful, or unjust, he cannot ascribe to God. There are, I know, innumerable moral and intellectual subtleties in which he may take refuge, in the hope of avoiding the antithesis which will show itself only in one light. But this force of doctrinal decay is always at work, and its efficacy is in proportion to the clearness of men's moral perceptions, and the degree in which they disengage themselves as an absolute law. It produces theories of atonement which avoid the naked substitution of the innocent for the guilty. It draws pictures of future retribution in which the omnipotent love of God

is not baffled by the impenitent misery of an eternal hell.

I have spoken of one kind of bastard rationalism ; there is another. Whatever theologians, even of the extreme Catholic type may say, the application of reason to religion lies in the nature of things : the only question is as to the method and the degree. The vast folios of the Fathers, the elaborate disquisitions of the Schoolmen, the massive and minute systems of the Protestant dogmatists, are all essentially rationalistic. There is no mystery which they do not attempt to analyse, no religious fact too obscure to be made the subject of an inference, no divine reality too sublime to be woven into a system. If we may judge from the immemorial practice of Christendom, rationalism is the appropriate method of building up vast and complicated edifices of belief : it is out of place only when applied to the digging of foundations. Employ reason as much as you will in drawing inferences and establishing conclusions, but for the sake of all that is holy never use it to examine an assumption or to test a premise ! And it is curious and instructive to note how some of the last deliverances of philosophy tend to the acknowledgment of mystery in religion, and discourage the application of human faculties to matters that are essentially above them, and limit the province of formal logic to ideas that can be wholly grasped,

and bid men speak of divine realities 'with bated breath and whispered humbleness.' In a sense that is only too true, philosophy declares God to be the Unknown and the Unknowable. We cannot shut up the Divine Infinitude in a syllogism. When we make God's attributes a link in a chain of reasoning, our argument runs up into contradictions. All we can do is to catch a glimpse of his Being and Perfectness, now on this side, now on that; and our attempts to combine them into a whole end in a dazzling confusion, like that which strikes us when we look at the sun, an excess of light that is almost darkness. It matters little whether reason be critical or only expository: there are some things which are too great for it, and confound it.

I turn now to the second half of my subject. The reawakening of Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was, as I have already stated, general: it left no department of intellectual activity untouched: literature, religion, philosophy, natural science, each in succession felt its influence. But it followed from the fact that the so-called ages of faith had passed in one long sleep of indifference to the exact study of nature, that science woke to life only when men had for some time been busy in the regions of literary culture and philosophical speculation. The Moors of Spain had, strange to say, proved themselves the heirs

of Hellenic science : astronomy and geometry, favourite studies of the Greeks, they had pursued further than their masters : they had invented the numerals which make arithmetic easy : they had laid the foundations of algebra, and made discoveries which are still recorded in the nomenclature of chemistry. But I cannot see that this manifestation of intellect holds any natural place in the history of European development : it was Eastern in its origin, its triumphs were recorded in the obscurity of an Eastern tongue ; and although we cannot altogether refuse it an influence upon Christian thought, its chief interest is perhaps that which belongs to a brilliant blossoming which has borne but little fruit. These Moors did good work for science, but it has had to be almost all done again : the martial and bigoted Christianity which subdued them was too ignorant to appropriate the results of their labours. And Luther belonged to a generation which lived but in the first grey dawn of modern science. The world had just been widened by the three great voyages : Columbus had discovered America (1492), Vasco de Gama had doubled the Cape (1498), Magellan had united their discoveries into one by circumnavigating the earth (1522). Mark these dates : the Confession of Augsburg belongs to 1530 : theology was already putting on the form of finality when natural science was but feeling, with the almost

aimless fingers of an infant, after the truth. I gravely doubt whether Luther at all realized the meaning of what was going on around him: I look upon him as too much absorbed in the changeful fortunes of the Reform, and in his own personal struggles and temptations, to note the attempts that were being made to read the universe with a scientific eye. But it is a characteristic fact that Melanchthon was a firm believer in astrology, a caster of horoscopes, a watcher of starry omens, and that both he and Luther put faith in strange monsters and portentous appearances, quaintly interpreting them of the fate of Popes and Monarchs. Still there is an epoch-making discovery in science which belongs to the age of the Reformation. In 1543, three years, that is, before Luther's death, Copernicus published his work, *De Revolutionibus Orbium Cœlestium*. Astronomy, the oldest of the natural sciences, thus, though in an imperfect way, put on the form which it has ever since retained. But many years were still to elapse, and many bitter battles to be fought, before it could compel a general assent to its conclusions.

We live in so full a sunlight of natural knowledge, as often, I think to fail to realize how modern a thing it is, and how completely the whole framework of our dogmatic theology was built up before natural science was born. Let me lay before you a few dates, which, if they do not too much try

your patience, will coalesce into the proof of a very striking fact. It was in 1609 that Galileo invented the telescope, which he used in the following year for the discovery of Jupiter's moons: in 1616 that he was condemned by the Inquisition for asserting the motion of the earth. Kepler's three laws were published by him, the first two in 1609, the third in 1617: in 1686, Newton laid his *Principia* before the Royal Society. Since that turning-point in the history of men's knowledge of the universe, enormous progress has been made: mechanics, optics, mathematics, have put new and continually more powerful instruments into the hands of the astronomer, who now includes in the scope of his science ages so long as to defy the imagination to realize them, spaces so vast as to be described only by elaborate devices of calculation. As astronomy obtained its priority over other sciences from its connexion with the primitive art of navigation, so anatomy took precedence from the necessities of medicine. Vesalius, the plates of whose book, *De Humani Corporis fabrica*, are still among the most beautiful of their kind, was Charles V's physician. He was on the right track, for he dissected the human body and reported only what he saw: but it was not till 1628 that Harvey publicly announced his capital discovery of the circulation of the blood. Men, however, had long worked at both these sciences,

beating out their great principles in a way which the brilliant performance of our own days tempts us to think clumsy and slow, before some of those branches of knowledge which now attract the largest attention had been cultivated at all. It was in the latter half of the eighteenth century that modern chemistry took its origin in the researches of Cavendish, Priestley, and Lavoisier. into the composition of air and water; but the Atomic theory, on which all its calculations are made, was the work of a philosopher whose reverend old age I well remember; while its last achievement, the Spectrum Analysis, which defines the physical constitution of sun and stars, is a triumph of yesterday. Again, a little more than a hundred years ago, geology, destined to succeed to astronomy as the science hated by theologians, was slowly struggling to the birth, though the principle of uniformity which now dominates it was formulated by Sir Charles Lyell only a few years ago, while the demonstration of the antiquity of man upon the earth is of later date still. The first great name in systematic botany is that of Linnæus, whose works appeared between 1731 and 1753, while the introduction of a natural classification is due to the elder and younger Jussieu, who belong to the latter half of the same century. Electricity and magnetism, sciences which at the present moment promise everything to their successful

cultivators, may be traced back to the beginning of the eighteenth century ; but the great names and great discoveries which illustrate them are all recent. And it is characteristic of the latest scientific activity, that sciences seem more and more to run into one another and coalesce ; that one law is seen to prevail through many regions of thought ; that forces are discerned to be interchangeable and guessed to be ultimately identical. The theory that heat is only a mode of motion has been proved by the actual determination of its mechanical equivalent : mechanical force is everyday converted into electricity, and electricity into light, or mechanical force again. So in regard to the sciences of life, extending on one side into the secret processes which physiology aims to track, on the other to what were once conceived as the merely formal classifications of natural history—all are now combined into a majestic unity by the theory of evolution. But Cuvier's is almost the first great name in the annals of comparative anatomy; and the 'Origin of Species,' the *Principia* of our age, was not published till 1859.

During the whole of this period, a change, at first slow, but afterwards rapid, has been taking place in men's conceptions of the universe. For the most part it has matured itself in entire independence of theological ideas. It is true that at some points of the frontier between religion and

science skirmishes have been continually going on: first astronomy, then geology, bore the brunt of theological opposition: a post of honour which, until theologians saw, or thought they saw, that they could turn it to their own purposes, has last of all been occupied by the theory of evolution. But this guerrilla warfare has attracted more attention than it deserved. The main forces on either side have not been engaged, nor has it been waged about the key of the position. Men of science have calmly pursued the path of investigation, leaving religion to accommodate itself as it best could to the results of their search: divines, in the most remarkable way, have repeated the old formulas, enforcing the ancient view of the universe and God's relation to it, as if science did not exist. The controversy as to whether it was possible to reconcile the first chapter of Genesis with the facts of geology, no one has greatly cared about: one explanation of the discrepancy has succeeded another; but the religious people were not in their hearts convinced that the facts of geology were facts, while the scientific people were too certain of them to care to look at the matter in another light. The real difficulty is, that the scenery in the midst of which the drama of religion is played—if I may use such a metaphor—has been wholly changed. We live in a widened world. The horizons of

time and space are indefinitely enlarged. Throughout the whole of the universe, which thus opens upon us in inconceivable vastness and complexity, obtain one law, one order. When we take the Bible, the religious ideas of the Jews, the Pauline exposition of the Gospel, the millennial expectations of the early Church, out of the narrow and half-known world of Augustine or of Luther, and transport them into this fresh universe, will they fill the same place, can we look upon them in the same light? Will the systems of doctrines which have been elaborated from these materials tally any longer with the world of ascertained fact? And if these questions be answered, as they must be, in the negative, we are next compelled to ask: Can we reconcile old faith with new fact by dropping certain constituents of it, as merely local and temporary? Or is it unhappily necessary to recommence the labour of faith, and to demand from history, from philosophy, from nature, the religion which we can no longer inherit from simpler and less self-conscious ages?

In thus endeavouring to define the situation, I am conscious of having transcended the proper limits of my subject. I have not to say yea or nay to this crucial question, but only to point out, with such clearness and completeness as I can, the extent of the divergence between the doctrine of the Reformation and the science of to-day. And

first, let me indicate how much of a theological kind is involved in the change from the geocentric to the heliocentric system, and the remarkable developments which have since taken place in stellar astronomy. I will not trouble you with the repetition of quite familiar facts: the difficulty is not to apprehend them with the mind, but to give life and meaning to them by the imagination. They all tend one way: to enlarge the universe and to lessen man. This earth, from being the centre of created things, with its sun to rule by day, its moon and stars to rule by night, has dwindled to the tiniest atom of star-dust, a mere luminous point in a milky-way of worlds. We find ourselves, even within the limits of our own narrow system, in presence of secular changes which look forward and back over almost inconceivable areas of time. From day to day we watch, with such precision as an existence which is by comparison but momentary permits, a universe in perpetual process of development and decay: nebulæ slowly coalescing into suns, suns slowly 'paling their ineffectual fires.' But the whole scale is so vast as to convict all cosmogonies of childish presumption, and to take from us any clear conception of end or beginning. It seems to me that the attempt to conceive God becomes more trying to the imagination in proportion as the universe widens, than which he

is wider, as the grandeur grows, than which he must be grander. We are, comparatively speaking, almost on a level with the tribal Jehovah who brought the Hebrews out of Egypt: we are still not hopelessly below the God who hung with shining lamps the solid firmament that stretches above the earth: but how shall we rise to the thought of him who is the Lord of innumerable worlds, the Ruler of the boundless spaces, the Master of the eternal years? I may be told here that moral and material greatness are incommensurable quantities; that the moral law affected Kant with as much wonder and admiration as the starry order; and that the possession of a spiritual nature, however insignificant his physical frame, makes man free of the spiritual universe. True; but is this pin-point of earth the only spot of the universe upon which reasonable life exists, on which it is possible to praise and to pray, to sin and to aspire? From the very nature of the case, this question can never receive categorical reply; but I confess that it seems to me a quite inconceivable thing, upon any hypothesis, theistic or atheistic, that only a millionth part of the universe should be instinct with the fire of reason, and all the rest mere cold, dead matter. Did, then, God, and such a God as the all of things proves he must be, die for us? I say it with the deepest respect for the religious feelings of

others, but I cannot but think that the whole system of Atonement of which Anselm is the author, shrivels into inanity amid the light, the space, the silence of the stellar worlds.

To call in our speculation to narrower limits, I have already remarked that the various attempts to reconcile the cosmogony of the first chapters of Genesis with the ascertained facts of geology are of no real interest. They vary from year to year, and are satisfactory to few but their own inventors. On the one hand, the geologist observes that his own science affords the standard in conformity with which the Biblical narrative is sought to be interpreted: on the other, the literary critic claims the controversy as his own, and traces up the legend to a Chaldean or Arcadian antiquity with which Moses had indisputably nothing to do. But the date at which man appeared upon the earth is a matter for purely scientific determination, and it can be fixed, at all events negatively, in a way for which the poor six thousand years of Biblical chronology altogether fail to provide. We are carried, as I have already shown, far back into a civilized antiquity by the newly-deciphered records of Egypt and Babylonia. The certain inferences which may be drawn from the history and structure of language reveal to us a period beyond written record, at which the ancestors of almost

all the peoples of modern Europe lived in Northern India, already in possession of the arts of settled life. At this point geology takes up the story, introducing us to the tribes who lived in Irish crannoges, who built the Swiss lake-dwellings, the refuse of whose food is heaped up in the kitchen-middens of the Baltic—until we make our slow way backward to the men who chipped the flint instruments of the valleys of the Somme and the Ouse, at a time when England was not yet an island, and the rhinoceros and the elephant roamed over her plains and left their bones in her caves. And though now in a world strangely different in outward aspect from that in which we live, we are still on distinctly human ground. Man, in full possession of his characteristic faculties, is fighting the battle of his race against nature. It is in virtue of brains that he is surviving. He uses tools, he builds, he cultivates. And if the pathetic record of the burial cave of Aurignac may be trusted, he has already some dim outlook towards a life to come.

There is, however, one scientific principle of the greatest importance which underlies and justifies the projection of the reason and imagination over vast areas of space and time. It is trust in the uniformity and universality of law. A law of nature once established, we assume, until cause be shown to the contrary, that it is valid in the

most distant star as on the earth's surface, a million years ago as now. And this is not so much an abstract principle as a practical confidence, slowly built up out of long experience of investigation. We can go back to a time when even among inquirers into nature a certain expectation of miracle prevailed, such as now exists in full force among the pilgrims to Lourdes or La Salette. But little by little, as more vigorous methods of research were adopted and accumulating scientific experience became more accurate, this expectation faded, and a quite contrary one took its place. Whatever record there might be of miracle in past times or in other circumstances, the investigator encountered none under his own scalpel or in the field of his own microscope, until at last it grew to be a silent assumption, underlying his whole method, that none would be encountered. It would be difficult to say into what force of universal cogency this has developed under the stimulus of the scientific activity of the last century. The invariability of law is the very atmosphere which the investigator breathes. He places a daily reliance upon it, and is not disappointed. It is the tacit condition on which he makes all his predictions, and for whatever other reason they fail, it is never for this. Philosophically speaking, believers in God cannot prove the impossibility of miracle: he can always,

by an arbitrary exercise of will, interfere with the operation of his own laws. But everyday adds to the already overwhelming accumulation of evidence that he never does. The controversy may still be conducted on a priori ground, so far as it is conducted at all, but a body of habitual opinion is being formed which takes no heed of it. The God of a scientific world must be conceived of as one who is absolutely faithful to his own methods, and who permits those methods to be scrutinized by men.

A new element has been introduced into the controversy between old modes of belief and new scientific ideas by the doctrine of evolution, which, first formulated in Darwin's 'Origin of Species' forty-six years ago, has so rapidly gained acceptance. The whole cycle of ideas put forward in that celebrated book were presented at first as one of those hypotheses in which the scientific imagination seeks to anticipate the results of minute inquiry, and which investigation may either confirm or modify or reject. But with quite unexampled rapidity the idea of evolution has established itself, not only in biology, but in almost every other department of human thought. What was forty years ago a daring supposition in one branch of investigation, has risen to the dignity of a general method: it is a doctrine of slow and minute changes, each brought about by

natural forces, each surviving and perpetuating itself in proportion as it is adapted to the environment of the organism in which it takes place. In biology, we call it the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest: in geology, it reveals itself as the theory which abolishes cataclysms in favour of the constant operation of ordinary forces through long periods of time: in history, it seeks to explain change and growth by tracing each successive state to its origin in that which preceded it: in morals, it educes the conscience of a civilized age from the gregarious instincts of savage men, or the apes from which they grew. Whether itself developed into a world philosophy, the theory of evolution will account for everything, as its devotees claim for it, may be gravely doubted: to trace man back from the ape to the ascidian, from the ascidian to I know not what more primitive germ—to discern the potentiality of all this various world in the original fire-cloud—is still much more a brilliant escapade of the imagination than a sober feat of reason. The geologist, the biologist, the physicist, cannot yet agree upon the number of millions of years required for such an evolutionary process; nor are the philosophical difficulties in the way by any means wholly overcome. But the fact remains, that if evolution will not account for everything, it undisputably explains

much ; that it can never again be left out of their reckoning, not only by biologists, but by historians, by moralists, by theologians ; and that at almost every point it has opened up new questions as to God's relation to the world, and man's place in it, which imperatively ask reply.

For if the idea of evolution is to be accepted, we have done with that of special creation. No doubt the former is much more conceivable than the latter, and therefore fits more easily into a scientific statement : while, again, it is obvious that what is really involved is not the abolition of Divine action upon matter, but a change in the method of its operation. No form in which the doctrine of evolution can be put dispenses with a *primum mobile* : there must be some force at work to produce the infinitesimal variations on which so much depends, and some general law by which the conjoint survival of the fittest tends in a given direction. Why but for this should ape rise out of ascidian, and man out of ape, the living all of things, lifting itself, as it were, to a higher level, tending to some unseen goal ? But the conception of Divine action reconcilable with this process must be one of two : either God is the great Mechanician who, having started the complex contrivance, leaves it to work out its end according to pre-arranged and unchangeable law, or he is the Immanent Life, the All-energizing

Force, sustaining, vivifying, developing all things in accordance with the necessities of his own nature. Each of these suppositions will serve to reconcile evolution with theism, though neither, I fear, will fit in with ordinary notions of providence and piety. And it is curious to note how in connexion with the new doctrine have come up again the old difficulties as to the origin of evil and the prevalence of pain in the world. This struggle for existence, in which life and the possibilities of life are so prodigally wasted: this charnel-house of nature, in which the various tribes of animate things, preying on one another, slay and are slain continually: this upward progress, the wheels of whose car of juggernaut pass over the bodies of countless innocent victims—have taken possession of the imaginations of men, and questions long silent are again asked as to their reconcilability with the omnipotence and perfect goodness of God. It is not for me now to indicate even in the briefest way a possible line of answer. I have only to note the existence of currents of thought against which accepted theological ideas will have to defend themselves or to suffer modification.

In one particular the theory of evolution lays hold of certain undisputed facts of human character which are the natural basis of theological doctrine, and gives them a quite new interpretation.

Whence this strange intermingling of evil with good in man? Whence these brutal passions, this selfish indifference to suffering, this cool malignity of purpose, which are the dark threads of the chequered web of life? Whence this evil that we would not, rising up within us to overcome the good that we would? Christian theology has accounted for these things on the theory of a fall from a primeval state of innocence, the result of which has been the transmission of a vitiated nature from the first father to all his children. The historical foundation of this doctrine has been destroyed by the recognition of the mythical character of the narrative in Genesis; but certain facts still remain—the existence of the passions and tendencies, and their hereditary transmission in accumulating or diminishing strength—which every theory of human nature must take into account. What if for a fall, evolution substitutes a rise of man? What if the evil which is in us, and sometimes masters us, be the brute which is slowly dying out of our nature? These are secular changes, always gradual in their operation, accelerated now, and now retarded by various causes, within and outside of us. But it would at once fall in with the general scope of evolution, and answer to facts which neither religion nor philosophy can affect to ignore, to suppose that some survival of the

fittest was taking place upon moral ground also; that the passions natural to a powerful animal were giving place to the affections, and passing under the control characteristic of civilized man; that we were losing the scars, outgrowing the mutilations, which we received in the long, hard struggle with nature; that new capacities were coming into play, a larger aim opening out before us; and that the traces we yet retain of that lower companionship out of which we have emerged, are themselves the guarantee of the upper air and the ampler life which remain for us in the future.

But a question of questions, which will have to be answered if religion is to come to terms with the idea of evolution, is as to the area to which that idea and others cognate with it legitimately apply. The theory has had its origin in the study of physical nature: it is the contribution which the scientific research of our day, gathering up its light into one focus, makes to general philosophy. On the one side, the tendency of thought fostered by Paley and the Bridgewater Treatises has been to expect nature to reveal the secret of God; on the other, the men of natural science, flushed with the delight of this brilliant generalization, have demanded that it shall be rigorously applied in every department of human thought. Everywhere, they say,

we are in the grip of law: there is nothing in our life which is not accounted for by our inheritance and our environment: if God exists, he neither can nor will break in sunder the bonds of fate which tie us down: we cannot feel the touch of his hand upon our personal life, and the best that is left to us is the faith that somehow and in a general way, in which we too shall have our share, 'good will be the final goal of ill.' And the only escape from this spiritual imprisonment lies in keeping open a region of free and intimate intercourse between God and the human soul. There is the less difficulty in this, as the existence of such a region, the reality of such an intercourse, are precisely the message which religious men in all ages bring, out of the depths of their own experience, to those who have less insight than themselves. This they announce as 'the fountain-light of all their day, the master-light of all their seeing,' and not their light only, but their strength and their consolation. And as this experience involves a series of facts as real and as little to be pushed aside as the embryonic changes and the aborted organs which are rightly regarded as so full of meaning, Religion yet retains the right of reserving to herself a space in which spirit may meet with spirit, on the one side in impulse and support, on the other in aspiration and self-surrender. Perhaps we have been too hasty

in expecting to see the character of a perfect God reflected in the mirror of a material world. We ought to have recollected that only soul answers to soul.

But I should commit a grave error if I left upon your minds the impression that the result of modern scientific inquiry was only to put new difficulties in the way of religion. I do not know that many of the ideas of which I have spoken are harder to deal with religiously than others whose place they are taking: all that my argument is designed to show is, that they cannot be dealt with in precisely the same way, and therefore necessitate some modification of theological conceptions. On the other hand, there are results of research which seem to me to assist a religious conception of the universe. From one point of view, the general effect of the newest science may be described as simplification. Chemistry reads us a list of some sixty-six primitive substances out of which everything is built up, and may yet, as new instruments for compelling the secrets of nature are devised, add to the number. At the same time she is also beginning to guess, with that instinctive apprehension of the truth which often precedes discovery, that all these may be but one and the same primitive stuff variously compounded, and that when we have said matter we have said all. So, in like manner, one of

the chief triumphs of the newest time is the convertibility of force ; and it is a permissible speculation, to which many facts point, that one force, in different forms, moves and sustains the universe. But what is matter ? This dull, dead stuff of the world, which makes its impression upon every sense, which was once taken as the quite comprehensible antithesis of incomprehensible spirit, turns out to be the most fathomless of mysteries, the abyss which transcendental physicists explore, finding always a deeper depth below. Idealists argue, with a plausibility not easy to refute, that it does not exist at all : materialists refine its coarser characteristics away, till it exhibits itself as one phase of a reality which on the other side is known as spirit. But can the distinction between force and matter be kept up, or must not even this simple duality be resolved into a unity which is simpler still ? We may say, with Boscovich, that what we call atoms are only centres at which forces manifest themselves ; and the more we think out the conception into its details, the more will it appear that the hypothesis of matter is superfluous, and its existence difficult to prove. But if, thus resolving our knowledge into its simplest elements, we find ourselves surrounded by an impenetrable mystery, and in presence of a single all-energizing force, what shall prevent us from uttering the name of God,

the Incomprehensible, the One? The transition from force to person, from law to will, is one for which, I know only too well, science builds no bridge; but the wings of Faith are not yet clipped, and she flies lightly over the abyss.

VIII

RESULTS AND TENDENCIES OF MODERN THOUGHT

In all that I have said hitherto, I have taken for granted that the facts of religion are facts, and may be recognized as such by human faculties. It is true that I think that theology has been far too minute and precise; that it has attempted to define and distinguish when the only word upon its lips should have been an *O Altitudo*; that it has placed mysteries whose abyss no logic can sound, details of faith which no research can verify, on the same footing as the great truths, the cardinal principles, which alone feed the religious life. But I mean by religious facts something external to human emotions and aspirations; that which is indeed their object, and without which they could not long sustain themselves in life. Yet there are thinkers, whether few or many I hardly know, who, setting a real value on religion as the supreme agent in the softening, the sweetening, the elevating of human life,

imagine that it can permanently exist without theology, and that so long as the characteristically religious emotions and affections are felt, it does not matter whether they have any intellectual basis or no. Ideals, they think, are just as good for all practical purposes as facts; the abstract conception of a perfect Being as operative as the conviction of a Living God; and the charm of the Christ what it is, were the Gospels no more than the most consummate of religious fictions. And so no dogmas are worth anything; for the simplest statement of theological principle is tainted by the same presumption and unreality as the minutest definition of the *communicato idiomatum*. I need not say how this theory of religion is fatal to the very idea of theology. It not only degrades it from the rank of a science, but takes it out of the category of things that may be known. Its history becomes a mere record of human folly and presumption, of wasted toil, foolish strivings, baffled aspirations. And if its past be thus melancholy, it can look forward to no future. It is not so much that its subject-matter is unsearchable, as that it has none. Human nature will continue to strain towards its ideal, learning, gradually we must suppose, to rely on other helps, to lean on other supports, than those which are afforded by a belief in divine realities; and in the meantime, as all dogmas are

equally worthless, a wise man will accommodate himself to the prejudices of his age, and worship as his neighbours worship.

That, under such circumstances, men should worship at all, is perhaps sufficient testimony to the reality of that religious emotion which seeks to justify itself so strangely. And I am disposed to explain this state of mind by the fact that it is a survival of religion after the death of theology. Men, whom an imperious intellectual necessity drives from outpost after outpost of faith, may yet be unwilling to unloose their hold of affections which they need as a counterbalance to the coarseness and commonness of the world. But I am bound to believe—else were my long labour wholly vain—that they are fundamentally in error, and that they mistake the impulse of old forces, which once moved them too powerfully to be ever wholly extinct, for a living manifestation of energy, which they can transmit to their children, and which will stir generations to come. I am far from depreciating the efficacy of some of those moral ideals, which are not religious either in their origin or their sanction, and which, under present circumstances of belief, may be expected to move and mould men more powerfully than ever before. But I do not think that their method of operation is the same as that of the religious ideals which most of us believe to be realized in

fact, and it can serve no good purpose to confound them. I do not understand how men continue to pray, unless they are convinced that there is a listening ear. It seems to me that there is all the difference in the world between a Christ who actually walked the earth in the consummate beauty of holiness, and one who owes the strength and symmetry of his character to vivid ethical imagination and subtle literary skill. The last may still charm and raise and refine those who study him; but the first makes mankind richer, opens out new possibilities to human nature, effectually calls upon all who love him to come up into the mount of God. So, too, the mathematician may 'scorn delights and live laborious days' for his science, which may screen him from all grosser temptations, and teach him the method of an innocent life: the unbelieving philanthropist, consumed by the enthusiasm of humanity, may wholly give his life to others, and in so doing learn the secret of self-forgetfulness. But even this, though a fine, is not the same thing as to feel the awful touch of God upon the soul; to obey a holier will, to lean upon a steadier strength than our own; to bind ourselves to the service of a living righteousness; and to find in trust of a personal lovingkindness the inspiration of courage and patience. The strain towards an unrealized ideal still allows man to think himself

the highest and best thing that he knows: obedience to the Living God subdues him into humility and chastens him to self-distrust.

With those who affirm that religion is an emotion of the childhood of humanity which its maturer years have outgrown, I do not feel myself in this place called upon to argue. They are, in this country at least, very few in number, and not accustomed to maintain their position with a very rigid consistency. By an extension of the meaning of the word religion, which at this moment I neither approve nor blame, but which makes it include all the ideal and unselfish elements of life, it is not difficult to show that they are all religious in their own way and in conformity with their own convictions. But there is the less need thus to play with words which have an old and well-defined meaning, that I imagine I see a distinct and widespread desire on the part of philosophical and scientific thinkers, who have decisively broken with old forms of faith, to work their way back again to some standpoint of practical religion. It may not be to Christianity, as that word is commonly understood: even its simplest and least dogmatic forms may seem to them to state more of divine realities than can be fully proved: but it is to religion that their return is being made, to the recognition of something that is supersensual and divine, to

the acknowledgment of a righteous order in the world, and the dependence of human nature for its best impulses upon an Infinite Holiness. And it is not only in the interests of these men, but in those of religion itself, that I plead for a bolder policy on the part of the churches, and ask for a revision of formularies, a relaxation of bonds. Scientific men have been educated, by the whole method and experience of their lives, into careful observation and accurate statement of facts. They want proof for all that they are to believe: they are accustomed to distinguish between hypothesis and reasonable certainty. They do not understand the principle of accommodation, of taking words in non-natural senses, of looking to the historical derivation of formularies rather than to their plain meaning. It is not their practice to make solemn and precise statements of belief, and then to explain them away. Possibly they are too exacting in their demands upon theology and theologians: they forget that the same methods of discovering and testing truth are not applicable in all departments of human thought: they do not sufficiently take into account the necessarily infinite character of religious realities, or recognize the fact that when logic has done all it can, there are yet place and work for faith and aspiration. But when all needful allowances have been made on either

side, much remains to be done in assimilating the methods and results of theology with those of other sciences, if the men of whom I have spoken are to be reconciled with religion. Can theology, then, afford to be at variance with the keenest wits, the most judicial intellects of the day? Or is it of any use to bid them, in the old imperious fashion, submit their reason to the divine authority alleged to be embodied in Church or Bible? In that intellectual activity which is their very life, they live by reason, and must stand or fall by it.

And it must be recollected that scientific culture is rapidly extending. The number of educated men, whose chief intellectual training and interest lie in the study of natural science, increases every-day. Such men, having little to do with literature except as a mental recreation, are apt to exhibit at once the strength and the weakness of the scientific intellect: its love of accuracy, its demand for strict reasoning, its passion for definite results, and at the same time its disbelief in other methods of ascertaining truth than those which it has itself found effectual. But whether this state of things be favourable to religion or not, it is a fact and must be reckoned with. On the other hand, it is no longer possible for theology to shut itself up in the cell of its own peculiar erudition, and to claim implicit credence for whatever oracles it chooses

to utter. It finds its assumptions rudely questioned, its authorities carefully sifted. A dogmatic utterance of Augustine's, a rhetorical phrase of Jerome's, no longer weighs heavily on the mind of Christendom. Even were such a thing possible as a consensus of the Fathers upon any particular point of doctrine, criticism would at once reply by an investigation into the grounds of patristic authority. Ecclesiastical history, as now written, is inexorable in pointing out the mistakes of Reformers, the assumptions of Schoolmen, the inconsistencies of Fathers, the contradictions of Councils, the unfounded pretensions of Churches. Criticism asks of creeds, by whom they were enacted; of dogmatic systems, upon what foundation they repose; of the authority of Scripture, by what arguments it can be justified; and does not always receive an answer which it is willing to accept. Theology, in a word, has had to come down from the calm and lofty eminence of the temple, where she was wont to receive the unquestioning homage of her votaries, to mingle with men in their common haunts and daily avocations, to defend her own claims, and to rely for reverence on her intrinsic worth. That she can victoriously stand this test, I thoroughly believe: but it must be on condition that she frankly submits to it; that she is ready to abandon all untenable assumptions; that she throws off every

needless dogmatic burden; that she is simply faithful to the truths of which she is profoundly convinced. But the test is, year by year, being applied on a wider scale and with added stringency, and it is useless to try to evade it by retiring to the solitary height of authority.

I must honestly confess that I see no evidence that Christ ever intended to teach any dogmatic system of theology at all. Separating, as I must do between his own words and the interpretations put upon them by Apostle and Evangelist, I find in the Synoptical Gospels the earliest and most trustworthy tradition of his teaching. And, if this is so, it must be admitted that these documents—on other grounds the most valuable literary possession of the human race—are singularly ill-fitted for dogmatic purposes. They are a very incomplete record of what the Master actually said. Brief as they are, that incompleteness is increased by many repetitions. We cannot say that they submit theology or even religion to any systematic treatment. They are full of deep spiritual sayings, pregnant ethical precepts; but even these do not stand in logical connexion, and are not rounded off into a whole. The only impression of Christ's method which we can derive from them is, that he intentionally adapted his instructions to the individual, almost to the occasional necessities of those who heard them,

sowing his truth broadcast, and leaving the harvest to the good husbandry of God. It may have been otherwise: he may have formed a school and elaborated a system; but, if he did, the record fails to tell the tale, and we must look for his secret, not in the open page of the Gospels, but in the esoteric tradition of the Church. It is only when we consider the interpretations put upon Christ by lower and lesser minds than his, that we come upon the first traces of a system. That profound and penetrating religious genius to whom we owe the Fourth Gospel, wove Christianity into the web of a world philosophy, and strove to reconcile the simplicity of Hebrew monotheism with the breath of Hellenic speculation. Paul, whose keen perception had grasped the fact, which was hidden from some at least of the Twelve, that the Gospel was not to add a new distinction to Judaism, but to become the religious life of humanity, found himself under the necessity of at once offering it to the Gentile and vindicating it to the Jew, and so tried to think out for himself an intelligible and a logical position. I need not say that, even while I place these two great men on a lower level of spiritual insight than their Master—and they would have been the last to claim for themselves that position of equality with him to which the doctrine of the infallible inspiration of the New Testament

has practically elevated them—I acknowledge most fully the unspeakable obligation under which the Church of all ages lies to them. But not even in their writing will you find any system of religious thought which can compare in complexity and symmetry with those to which the Reformation gave birth, or such as are now considered to be the indispensable basis of church-fellowship. In the Fourth Gospel are the germs of that doctrine of the Deity of Christ which the first three centuries developed into the statements of the Nicene, three centuries more into those of the Athanasian Creed. In the Pauline letters is the outline of that doctrine of Atonement which the early Church passed by almost in silence, but which, revived by Augustine, by Anselm, by Luther, has since, in one form or other, met with almost universal acceptance. These developments may have been in the mind of Christ and lie implicitly in his words. But I confess I can see no proof of it ; and when I look at what alone we can suppose to have been the method of his intellectual training, and the attitude in which he consistently stood to Hebrew religious life, I must think it improbable as well as unproved.

I do not of course mean to assert that because the teaching of Christ, as we have it in its earliest records, embraces no dogmatic system, it is on that account not full of great and fruitful theo-

logical truths. Such a truth, the most fundamental, perhaps the most original of all, is the Fatherhood of God, and the relations of trust, love, obedience, awe, in which his human children stand to him. A correlative truth is the Brotherhood of Man, a fraternity which transcends all differences of country, colour, speech. A third is the Kingdom of God—the perfect society in which the new life poured into the individual heart was meant to issue. A fourth is the Future State, connected with this by the bond of those ethical principles which must be conceived of as tying all human life together. But it is remarkable how Christ is content with the simplest statement of these truths. He does not seek to develop them into what metaphysical theologians would now declare to be their necessary consequences; he does not attempt to bring them into logical co-ordination. In regard to the nature of God, he seems to me to stand on the plain ground of his ancestral monotheism. In regard to God's lovingkindness, equity, forbearance, forgiveness, omniscience, he is emphatic in statement, vivid in illustration; but of a philosophical doctrine of Divine attributes there is no trace. So, too, he is content to leave the future life under the veil of parable: he gives no encouragement to the theological scene-painters, who daub with their rude and staring colours the solemn chambers

of human destiny. And it is even more to be noticed that he seems to consider these few and simple truths sufficient, not only for the instruction, but for the purification, the elevation, the impulse of human life. It is from them that his appeals derive all their winning charm; his warnings, all their awful significance. They are the food of his own religious life, and he considers them adequate to feed the religious life of others. It is not that, like a consummate artist, he is able in the strength and versatility of genius to produce the greatest effects with the simplest means, but that in the region of practical religion the simplest means are alone necessary and alone efficacious. There are no more solemn and moving truths than those of which I have spoken. When others of a more derivative and complex kind seem to sway the hearts of men, it is only in the hidden energy of these.

It will at once be objected that there is very little in what I have said to differentiate Christianity from other religions, and that, if it is to have a characteristic quality of its own, it must be described in terms less vague. But I, for one, consider it no discredit to Christianity that, thus reduced to its simplest elements, it comes very near to what some have called Absolute Religion; the quintessence, that is, of all that the wisest minds have thought, all that the tenderest hearts

have felt, all that the keenest consciences have recognized as binding. Nor am I concerned to discuss the originality of Christ or the novelty of Christianity: the more these are magnified, the harder is it to find a place in the providential order for Hebrew faith and Hellenic wisdom. But, indeed, what Christ brought into the world was not so much new truth as fresh life—not so much ethical principles and precepts unknown before, as an enlarged capacity of moral obedience and growth. To discuss the secret of this spiritual life would lead me too far into thorny theological bypaths: I am content to rest in the fact. It is this which raises Christ above the level of the teacher, and gives him his claim to be called, however you may define the word, the Saviour of the world. It is this which justifies the contention of Evangelical divines of every school, that we go to him not to learn the outlines of a system, moral or theological, but to be inspired, moved, changed, saved. One of those deep sayings which seem to me to show that the author of the Fourth Gospel had access to a genuine fund of Christian tradition, which but for him would have perished, is, 'I am come that they may have life, and may have it abundantly.' And this I accept as an authoritative description of Christ's mission. But if it is so accepted, I must go on to point out that the possession of life must be taken

as the proof of contact and communion with Christ; that the qualifications for standing in the line of Christian affiliation are not intellectual, but moral and spiritual; and that it ought to be impossible to deny the name of Christian to any who acknowledge Christ as their Master, and can show any genuine likeness to him. This test might unchurch some loudly professing believers; it would admit many heretics to the fold; but it would at last gather in from diverse communions the pure, the self-forgetting, and the brave, and would make Christianity as wide a thing as Christendom.

I know that in thus pleading for the simplification of doctrine, for the enlargement of terms of communion, for the reconciliation of theology with new knowledge, I have never left the critical ground. We have looked at religion from the outside as a datum of history, a subject of speculation—a thing which it lies with ourselves to accept or reject according as it satisfies the tests by which our intellectual nature compels us to try it. And from one point of view it is and must be this. With the best will in the world, we cannot believe what is intrinsically incredible to us. Some *tour de force* of logic is necessary before we can abandon ourselves to the authority of a church, however complete may be our submission afterwards. But there is another attitude to religious truth which is not the critical, though we may call

in the critical judgment to justify it when the first storm of enthusiasm which compelled us to assume it has spent its force. Sometimes, under happy stress of circumstance, we do not choose a religion, but religion chooses us. In this higher order of things, Christ's was the natural procedure : his apostles did not, after long hesitation and much questioning, attach themselves to him ; but he chose them, he called them, he took possession of them, and they obeyed. They were carried away by a force generated beyond the bounds of their own nature ; their enthusiasm was the motion of a God within. Changes of theological opinion are, I know, produced by intellectual causes and run an intellectual course ; but when no religious impulses intervene, they are rarer than is commonly supposed, and all spiritual upliftings and transformations conform to the law of which I have spoken. And so I venture to think that to restore Christianity to the place which it has lost and is more and more losing in the hearts of thoughtful and educated men, still more to give back to it its old victorious energy in dealing with the sinful and the wretched, what is chiefly needed is a prophet of this latter day who, in the keenness and directness of his religious insight, will speak at once a piercing and a reconciling word. Such a one will be deeply penetrated with the scientific spirit, re-

joicing in the interpretation of nature as an unveiling of God, and desiring only the plain truth of history that he may trace in it the working of the Divine Hand. But he will be too full of the awe of direct vision to lose himself in the arid wastes of criticism, or to be led astray by the pedantries of scientific investigation. I dare venture to predict that, like every other true prophet, the future will fill his eye and heart too completely to suffer him to be a bond-slave of the past: present revelations always overbear old theologies, and no living church ever supplies the model of the New Jerusalem. I have no fear lest he should fall out of the ranks of Christ's soldiers; for I do not believe that religion has anything to offer to man that the Gospel does not hold, and I notice that what is strong and inspiring in newer systems is Christian in essence, if not always in name. I know that when he speaks men will crowd to hear him, and lay their hearts and lives in his hands; for the religious instincts of humanity are ineradicable, and even if they sometimes sleep, wake always to life and energy again. And though his clear and penetrating accents may not fall upon our living ears, and we can do nothing to direct the operation of the Spirit of God, which, like the wind, 'bloweth where it listeth,' yet it belongs to us of this generation to make straight the way of his coming,

by living and working in the light of our best knowledge and most intimate convictions. Intellectual difficulties we can to some extent reconcile : hindrances to church-fellowship we can remove : we can go back to the simplicity of primitive piety : we can acknowledge the oneness of the religious life. So, as age follows age, and each pours fresh wealth into the treasury of human knowledge—as men accumulate a riper experience, solving ever more perfectly the problems of life and entering upon wider possibilities —Christianity too will receive a fuller development, and mankind, with the acknowledgment of mystery and the cry of imperfection always upon its lips, will penetrate more and more deeply into the glory and the wonder of God.

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